

4th July 2023

Ms Sharon Franke
Community Development Manager
Bendigo Bank – Turramurra and Lindfield
1273 Pacific Highway
TURRAMURRA NSW 2074

E: Sharon.franke@bendigoadelaide.com.au

Dear Sharon

Re: Bendigo Bank Community Pitch 2023 for Funding of Signage within the Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion

On behalf of the Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment Inc (FOKE), I have much pleasure in making a submission for funding in support of your current year program.

FOKE is a long-established community group dedicated to the conservation and protection of Ku-ring-gai's built and natural environment. In 2018 FOKE initiated a project to add extra protections to and to increase awareness of Ku-ring-gai's natural and cultural heritage focusing originally on the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. This has since developed into a much broader area which includes other protected areas and most of the suburban areas within the municipalities of Ku-ring-gai, Hornsby, and the Northern Beaches. A peer-reviewed journal paper, *The Natural and Cultural History of the Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion*, has recently been published by the Linnean Society of NSW <https://bit.ly/449lZcN>

The Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion, as it has now been designated, is now one of three approved GeoRegion projects within Australia being supported by the National Geotourism Strategy being implemented by the Australian Geoscience Council Inc. FOKE is now working alongside the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the three Councils to develop this GeoRegion as a potential nomination as an Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark. Community (including Aboriginal) engagement is regarded as a key ingredient in the furtherment of this process. Geoparks serve to develop a focus on environmental education, protection, and geotourism development. In this regard, FOKE notes the large number of schools particularly located in the Upper North Shore that would benefit enormously from gaining access to field located environmental resources.

I have enclosed a document which describes the scope and rationale for the development of this project, as well as the substantive level of technical assessment studies that have been undertaken to date. You will note that in association with the NPWS and the Councils, we are focusing on developing a number of initial geotrails (i.e., existing walking tracks which include information about the landscape, geology, plants and animals and aboriginal culture). This work requires the design and erection of interpretive signage, all of which requires funding support. You will note that in its referenced letter of 30 June 2023, Ku-ring-gai Council has detailed its signage requirements and has advised its support for this fundraising campaign.

2016 NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE AWARDS HIGHLY COMMENDED
2009 NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE AWARDS HIGHLY COMMENDED
2008 NSW GOVERNMENT HERITAGE VOLUNTEERS AWARD
2000 FOKE, WINNER, NSW HERITAGE OFFICE CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION AWARD
"HERITAGE WATCH OVER OUR PLACE OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE –KU-RING-GAI"
KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL COUNCIL (NSW) METRO PRIDE AWARDS.

To achieve this objective, the project Steering Committee has formed the view that seeking community funding using a ‘crowdfunding’ methodology represents an innovative way of progressing the work that needs to be undertaken. It is submitted that the support of Bendigo Bank of such a program would prove an effective means of seed funding that has the potential of achieving a multiplier effect as the project grows in scope and works towards the scenario of being supported by government as a nomination for a UNESCO Global Geopark.

Should Bendigo Bank be attracted to supporting this methodology, FOKE would like to ask please for funding support on the basis of matching dollars raised up to the capped level of \$10,000. The promotion and marketing support of Bendigo Bank would also prove a substantial contribution in raising awareness about the GeoRegion as well as encouraging community participation in fund raising. To facilitate this approach, it would be the intention of FOKE to undertake a carefully considered assessment (including a cost benefit analysis) of the need to apply for and register with ACNC as a Charitable Organisation, should Bendigo Bank decide to support the proposed crowd funding campaign. FOKE would certainly make a decision in this regard prior to the commencement of any such campaign.

FOKE is proud to have initiated this truly unique community-supported project for Australia, which so visibly promotes the wonderful natural and cultural heritage of the Ku-ring-gai area, and I am sure that the North Shore community that resides, works, and recreates in this GeoRegion would warmly appreciate and applaud the support of Bendigo Bank.

Your sincerely

Kathy Cowley

Kathy Cowley
PRESIDENT, FOKE Inc.

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