



**Alice Springs Water Resource Strategy Steering Committee
Meeting # 6 "Assessing Draft Community Consultation Report"**

Thursday 15th December 2005

Attendees:

Vin Lange (NT Horticultural Partnerships Group), John Brisbin (ALEC), Alan Whyte (PWC), Patrick Dupont (CLC), Don MacDonald (NT Chamber of Commerce), (NRETA), Murray Stewart (ASTC), Jonathan Vea (NRETA), John Childs (NRETA), Luke Diddams (NRETA)

Apologies: Mark Stafford Smith (DK CRC)

Facilitator: Robbie Henderson (NRETA)

1. Endorsement of previous meeting reports

A motion was raised by Vin Lange (NT Horticultural Partnerships) to endorse the reports from meeting # 5; Seconded by John Brisbin (ALEC), the motion was accepted.

2. Introduction / Meeting focus

The progress of the Steering Committee was summarised with reference to the consultation process diagram (ASWRS Appendix 3). The Steering Committee were congratulated and thanked for their enormous efforts and achievements to date.

Robbie Henderson (NRETA) provided an overview of work undertaken by the NRETA planning team since meeting #5 and the focus of this meeting.

Final draft ASWRS

- The NRETA planning team have considered the feedback, opinions and suggestions from the general community (submissions & forums) and the steering committee, and have prepared the final ASWRS draft (section 5).
- NRETA Policy & Planning intend to present this draft to Government with the recommendation that it is declared as the Water Allocation Plan under the Water Act. In terms of consultation, the NRETA planning team do not intend to make significant changes to this draft with respect to its decisions and intentions, however editorial and structural changes may still occur.
- A focus of this meeting is to provide opportunities to comment on the content of the final draft ASWRS that will also be provided to Government.

Community Consultation Report

- NRETA Policy & Planning have also prepared the draft Community Consultation Report that will be presented to Government with the final draft ASWRS.
- This report belongs to the community, NRETA role in providing a draft and executive support to ensure that it is accurate and representative.
- The draft can change. A focus of this meeting is to provide opportunities and set the process in motion to make changes.

The key questions that were used by NRETA to guide the community consultation process were presented to the Steering Committee:

- What principles and values that should underpin decisions made in the Alice Springs Water Resource Strategy?
- How long do we want / expect the Amadeus aquifer water supplies to last?
- What are the beneficial values and uses for water around Alice Springs? What values should be protected?
- How adequate are the proposed water allocations for the Amadeus aquifers?
- What guidelines and rules should apply to water licensing and trading?
- What should be the role and who should be a member of a Water Advisory Committee (WAC)?

3. REVIEW OF STEERING COMMITTEE FEEDBACK & FINAL DRAFT ASWRS

Jonathan Veal and Robbie Henderson (NRETA) delivered a Power point presentation to review the Community Consultation Report and the final draft ASWRS by systematically addressing each feedback question.

3.1 Discussion of question 1: What principles and values should underpin decisions made in Alice Springs Water Resource Strategy?

All attendees agreed with the interpretation of the key principles in the consultation report. Attendees suggested that the principles in the final ASWRS draft needed to be reworded to make their meaning clearer to people outside of the committee.

ACTION:

Jonathan Veal (NRETA) to work on rewording some of the principles and to recirculate to the group for approval

3.2 Discussion of question 2: How long do we want / expect the Amadeus aquifer water supplies to last?

There was general agreement with the interpretation of Maximum Allowable Yield in the NRETA Draft Community Consultation Report. Don MacDonald (NT Chamber of Commerce) suggested that the diagram has great value, but could be improved to better communicate the distribution of views / scale / etc to those readers who are not as familiar with the Strategy.

The Steering Committee was generally pleased with the draft Strategy with regard to maximum allowable yield and had no further comment

ACTION:

Robbie Henderson (NRETA) to further develop the diagram and recirculate to the group.

3.3 Discussion of question 3: What are the beneficial values and uses around Alice Springs? What values should be protected?

- Vin Lange (NT Horticultural Partnerships) - Impressed that the report demonstrated clearly that there had been extensive discussion on the topic.
- Alan Whyte (PWC) - Impressed with the report / draft
- Questioned why the alluvial aquifers did not have 'public water supply' as a beneficial use. PWC are seeking funding to potentially develop Town Basin water treatment allow potable use, and reduce pressure on the non renewable Amadeus aquifers
- John Childs (NRETA) - Requested Alan Whyte (PWC) to provide information re the proposal to use alluvial aquifer water for public water supply
- Murray Stewart (ASTC) - Enquired as to whether the technology that PWC were looking at could be transferable to the other aquifers. **Response** – Alan Whyte (PWC) 'yes' explained that the process was reverse osmosis
- John Brisbin (ALEC) - Questioned why Environmental and Cultural beneficial uses are not declared for the Roe Creek Management Zone. **Response** – Jonathan Veal (NRETA) the water in the Roe Creek Management Zone are too far under ground to have environmental or cultural values.
- The revised map with the Roe Creek and Rocky Hill Management Zones could be misinterpreted as the arrows that are used could be read as the direction of water flow in the aquifer.

ACTION:

Alan Whyte (PWC) to provide John Childs with information regarding the alluvial aquifer water treatment proposal.

Jonathan Veal (NRETA) reformat the map using different symbols and to recirculate

3.4 Discussion of question 4: How adequate are the proposed water allocations for the Amadeus aquifers?

Vin Lange (NT Horticultural Partnerships) raised a concern with the statement in the draft ASWRS that potential allocation for emerging uses such as industrial and aquaculture would come from the allocation to agriculture. John Childs (NRETA) explained the rationale behind this decision and agreed to re-examine the draft for possible review.

It was suggested that the Community Consultation report should make it clear that there was consensus about the total volume of water being allocated (i.e. the overall allowable yield) with a difference of opinion only in the way in which this should be shared between public water supply and agriculture.

The Steering Committee was generally pleased with the draft Strategy with regard to water allocations and had no further comment

ACTION:

John Childs (NRETA) to re-examine how aquaculture and Industrial uses are accommodated into the Strategy. Draft response and distribute to Steering Committee

Robbie Henderson (NRETA) reword p.21 of Community Consultation Report relating to level of agreement on allocations. Use the word 'opposing' instead of competing.

3.5 Discussion of question 5: What guidelines and rules should apply to water trading and licensing?

- Alan Whyte (PWC) - Read out response from Daryl Day regarding proposed license conditions for public water supply in the draft ASWRS. PWC “not pleased” with proposed conditions on leakage and demand reduction.
- Patrick Dupont (CLC) - Tabled information about Sydney Water license conditions. Would support more stringent license conditions for PWC including targets for leakage reduction and demand management.
- John Childs (NRETA) - Have been involved in ongoing discussions with PWC regarding license conditions, especially with regard to leakage benchmarks and currently waiting for a response from PWC
- Offered to consider all feedback received on licensing and will distribute any changes to draft

ACTION:

Alan Whyte (PW), Patrick Dupont (CLC) to provide statements / information regarding license conditions to John Childs (NRETA) for consideration.

John Childs (NRETA) to consider feedback on license conditions, formulate a response and distribute to Steering Committee

3.6 Discussion of question 6: What should be the role and who should be a member of a Water Advisory Committee (WAC)?

- John Brisbin (ALEC) - Noted that the consultation report & strategy did not address the full extent of feedback regarding WAC roles / membership /operating arrangements etc. **Response:** Robbie Henderson (NRETA) replied that he had done some extra work on this section that he has not circulated and that he would distribute this to the Steering Committee.
- John Brisbin (ALEC) - Questioned where the funding for the WAC would come from, he suggested that the NWI has acknowledged help for administration but also mentioned licensing costs could be used. **Response:** John Childs (NRETA) funding of WAC won't be linked to NWI cost recovery – beyond the scope of this plan.
- Murray Stewart (ASTC) - Questioned whether the Alice Springs Town Council had been recommended for membership of the WAC. **Response:** Vin Lange (NT Horticultural Partnerships) replied that he thought the Town Council had been proposed to have an advisory role (see report from meeting # 5)

ACTION:

Jonathan Veal (NRETA) Develop further detail regarding WAC membership and operating arrangements, including budget. Distribute to Steering Committee

4. ASWRS Work Plan & General Comments

John Brisbin expressed concern about some aspects of the work plan, particularly the use of some verbs in describing the work to be carried out. **Response:** John Childs explained that it was a responsibility of the WAC to follow up the work plan rather than implement it, and went on to say that more work would be done on it by the NRETA planning team in consultation with the community / WAC .

Murray Stewart requested that someone from the NRETA planning team should make themselves available to brief the Council, particularly the CEO and Mayor, about the ASWRS and the outcomes of the Steering Committee meetings, perhaps in March. **Response:** John Childs said he would be happy to brief the Council, however it would be necessary to determine an appropriate time depending on when the Minister/ Cabinet consider the strategy for approval.

ACTION:

Jonathan Vea (NRETA): Review feedback (internal & external) on ASWRS Work Plan, draft response and circulate update to Steering Committee

(NRETA rep & Steering Committee Rep): Address Council meeting on the development and implementation of the ASWRS

5. Conclusion

A draft Ministerial document regarding presentation of the Strategy to Government was tabled by John Childs and unanimously accepted by the attendees. It was decided that the possibility of another meeting of the Steering Committee should be left open until after the actions from this meeting had been completed.

The meeting concluded at 5.15pm with drinks and thanks to all attendees.

NEXT MEETING: Date to be confirmed if a further meeting is deemed necessary

NOTE: See summary table of actions / target completion dates below.

Actions relating to the final draft ASWRS

Action	Responsibility	Target Completion Date
Reword the 'Guiding Principles' in the draft ASWRS. Consider wording from p.21 of the Consultation Report. Circulate update to Steering Committee	Jonathan Vea (NRETA)	13 Jan 06
Provide statements / information regarding license conditions to John Childs (NRETA) for consideration	Alan Whyte (PW) Patrick Dupont (CLC)	19 Dec 05 completed
Consider feedback on license conditions and formulate a response, distribute to Steering Committee	John Childs (NRETA)	20 Jan 06
Review how aquaculture and Industrial uses are accommodated into the plan with existing Beneficial Uses. Draft response and distribute to Steering Committee	John Childs (NRETA)	20 Jan 06
Incorporate further detail regarding WAC membership and operating arrangements, including budget. Distribute to Steering Committee	Jonathan Vea (NRETA)	13 Jan 06
Provide information to John Childs (NRETA) regarding projected 'potential' use of Town Basin water for PWS.	Alan Whyte (PW)	20 Jan 06
Review Beneficial Uses for Town Basin against Power Water proposal, draft response and distribute to Steering Committee	John Childs (NRETA)	20 Jan 06
Provide further comments and proposed items for the ASWRS Work Plan to Jonathan Vea (NRETA)	Steering Committee John Brisbin (ALEC) Patrick Dupont (CLC)	21 Dec 05 completed
Review feedback (internal & external) on ASWRS Work Plan, draft response and circulate update to Steering Committee	Jonathan Vea (NRETA)	20 Jan 06
Address Council meeting on the development and implementation of the ASWRS	NRETA rep Steering Committee Rep	Feb 06 TBC

Actions relating to the Community Consultation Report

Action	Responsibility	Target Completion Date
Redevelop the diagram for maximum allowable yield.	Robbie Henderson (NRETA)	completed
Incorporate comment that it would be desirable for the 'guiding principles' to persist through the review process	Robbie Henderson (NRETA)	completed
Reword p.21 of report relating to level of agreement on allocations. Use the word 'opposing' instead of competing.	Robbie Henderson (NRETA)	completed
Provide ALEC comments to Robbie (NRETA) regarding concerns about licensing / reporting arrangements for Rural, Stock & Domestic Use	John Brisbin (ALEC) Patrick Dupont (CLC)	21 Dec 05
Incorporate comment that Business Plan requirements would be clear and satisfactory to private enterprise	Robbie Henderson (NRETA)	06 Jan 06
Circulate complete/ updated draft Community Consultation Report to SC	Robbie Henderson (NRETA)	06 Jan 06
Review and provide final comments on the complete/ updated draft Community Consultation Report	Steering Committee	20 Jan 06