



Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee

DRAFT MINUTES FOR MEETING 24

Thursday 10th April 2008

1pm to 4pm

Meeting Room 1 Darwin City Council

1. Welcome And Apologies

Present:

Name	Representing
John Bailey	Independent Chairperson
Duncan Dean	Community Representative
Prue Barnard	Australian Marine Conservation Society
Luccio Cercareli	Local Government Association NT
Bob Wasson	Charles Darwin University, Chair Ecosystem Research Group
Lyn Allen	Executive Director, Environment Heritage & the Arts
Robyn Henderson	Environment, Heritage and the Arts – Project Coordinator, Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management
Chantal Caruso	Environment, Heritage and the Arts – Environmental Policy Officer LHC

Guest Speakers

Jason Hill	Land and Water Division, NRETA
Rod Applegate	Executive Director, Lands and Planning, DPI
Gerhard Visser	Principle Strategic Planner, Lands and Planning Division, DPI

Apologies:

Alastair Black	Darwin Port Corporation
Donna Jackson	Larrakia Nation Governing Committee, Larrakia Harbour Committee
Greg Bicknell	NT Chamber of Commerce
Chris Makepeace	Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT
Peter Ebsworth	Greening Australia NT

PREVIOUS BUSINESS

2. Acceptance Of Previous Minutes

The Committee agreed that the minutes from the previous meeting be accepted.

Moved: Luccio Cercareli

Seconded: Prue Barnard

3. Action Sheet From Previous Meeting

Action sheet noted.

4. Mapping of Acid Sulphate Soils

Jason Hill briefed the Committee on the current mapping survey of acid sulphate soils– the first of its type in the NT.

Acid sulphate soils occur when natural marine sediments (iron sulfide in particular) are exposed to oxygen, producing sulphuric acid. The runoff harms vegetation, fish, and even infrastructure in the proximity.

The mapping survey is sampling (to 3.5m) the Finniss to Adelaide Rivers, including Darwin Harbour. Vegetation surveys in Bynoe, Darwin Harbour (including Cox Peninsula) and Adelaide River are also being taken. So far no soils have been found to be sulphuric except for some areas in the Finniss.

The mapping project will be complete by June, and outcomes will include digital data, a Report, and mapping products. The Report will provide NT Guidelines, Acid Sulfate Soil Management Plans, and data on soil carbon levels (in tonnes per hectare) which may have implications on future development if the carbon price increases.

Bob Wasson suggested electronic sampling. Zonation of mangroves was also discussed.

Maps and the Report will be sent to DHAC upon completion.

5. & 6. Planning in the Darwin Harbour Region

Rod Applegate, Executive Director Lands and Planning, Department of Planning and Infrastructure provided an overview on the Strategic Planning in the Darwin Harbour Region.

NT Government Planning has a coordinated approach with a body of strategic and statutory planners. Darwin Harbour and its catchment is an area of 2100km², with a future population of 1 million (with 70% to live within the catchment) anticipated.

Principles of planning are the sustainable use and development of land and water resources, and to ensure developments (such as subdivisions) are cost effective.

East Arm and Middle Arm were zoned as sites for Industrial development in the Regional Structure Plan (1984). Glyde Point and Point Margaret were recently considered as possible locations for Industrial Development, but were found not to be feasible. The high conservation values and prohibitive infrastructure development costs rendered Glyde Point unsuitable, and until the Kenbi land claim is settled negotiations on Point Margaret are not an option.

Proposed development of Middle Arm as an Industrial Core Area

Key reasons for location:

- existing rail and power infrastructure, an existing gas hub, its central location to future growth precincts, and deep water port access are reasons for its choice
- conservation zones on Middle Arm have been expanded to include more mangrove areas
- government-owned land
- current gas plant has not been found to have had any adverse impacts to date.

Environmental Assessment of Middle Arm

Government will undertake a Gap Analysis to inform baseline environmental assessment to inform environmental studies in the future – as a 'Region'.

Terms of Reference will appear on the DPI website (<http://www.dpi.nt.gov.au/>) this week. The Ecological Research Group (ERG) and Ecological Monitoring Group (EMG) are well-positioned to advise DPI on who is most appropriate (and what the costs will be) of these studies. The aim is to broadly identify information gaps in the Harbour and address them through an informed framework.

The group discussed the environmental assessment process, including

- its concern with visual amenity on the existing and future gas plant
- Conoco Philips' (existing LNG plant at Wickham Point) plans to increase its existing plants' operational capacity (currently operating at only 1/3) which could result in the construction of another tank and will result in more ships in the harbour
- the possible impact on tourism
- The studies that make up the regional environmental assessment of Middle Arm will be funded by NTG and undertaken over a 3 year period. Assessment of any projects that are propose in this period will not be dependent on the assessment and be assessed formally under the Environmental Assessment Act The Inpex NOI and EIS process will contribute information to the holistic Assessment process
- Conoco Philips currently emits 6 million tonnes of CO₂. An emissions trading scheme will be in place by 2010 Conoco Philips' emissions will be addressed in the trading scheme.

NT Government is currently in the process of conducting studies and modelling with Treasury and CDU (demographics and projections) which will shape the Darwin Strategic Plan. In terms of the process of rolling out the strategic plan from a DHAC perspective, a working group including NRETA, industry and public representatives will be involved in the next stage of the process.

Other development planned in the Darwin Region

Residential Development planning was also discussed. Land release strategies are also planned in relation to

- expanding and developing Darwin Harbour, using principles of connectivity and environmental protection, and
- commercial nodal development
- native vegetation corridors are being considered for inclusion at new subdivision developments, for example at Bellamack native vegetation corridors have been identified and council will be responsible for their management.

Action:

Rod Applegate to provide copies of presentation to DHAC.

7. Water Quality Protection Plan (WQPP) Update and report on the Ecosystem Monitoring Group (EMG)

Michael Lawton provided an update on the WQPP and EMG.

Simon Townsend has taken a 3 year secondment at CDU and in the interim Michael will chair the EMG and be closely involved with the WQPP.

EMG

The group met in February and identified the need to follow up with further consultation on WQ monitoring. A broader scope of WQ parameters will be used, and the outer-middle-upper categories were agreed on. Biological indicators are to be developed and cultural values will be incorporated. The EMG will seek advice from TRaCK and other sources in relation to key indicators.

WQPP

The budget to 2009 is currently being negotiated with the Australian Government Coastal Catchment Initiatives group.

Michelle Burford's recent TRaCK presentation indicated that the data available on Darwin Harbour demonstrated a net flux of nutrients into the Harbour from the ocean, with the influx from the catchment small in

comparison. It is an unexpected result and more information is needed to confirm this result and in order for informed decisions to be made.

8. Larrakia Harbour Committee (LHC) Update

Chantal Caruso provided an update on the LHC.

Inpex is seeking to meet with Larrakia and it was anticipated this might happen around the time of the next LHC meeting.

Donna Jackson has been very busy over the last few months, and we've been following up the items reported at the last meeting, such as the Petroglyph signage on Middle Arm. Donna is attending training for Participatory Training for an Aboriginal research group. Donna also was a participant in the UN International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change recently hosted at CDU. Donna will be able to brief the group about the outcomes and recommendations at the next DHAC meeting.

Chantal met Dr Greg Phillips (Marine Planner with NRETA's Marine Biodiversity unit) who is currently working on the Marine Bioconservation Strategy and Marine Protected Areas Strategy to discuss opportunities for involvement of Larrakia people with consultation and future tourism and conservation work.

A member of LHC is training in the marine debris survey and collection program at NRETA's marine branch. LHC provided \$10,000 test program funding for this program.

John Bailey reported to the group that Larrakia Harbour Committee does not receive ongoing funding. DHAC members agreed that its continuation is strongly supported. He requested that DHAC members consider possible funding options to support the LHC, possibly from within their existing groups and networks, and report back at the next meeting.

Resolution:

DHAC strongly supports the continuation of LHC

Action:

Web links to the UN Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change website will be sent to DHAC Members.

DHAC Members to consider LHC funding sources from within their networks.

9. Current Environmental Impact Assessment Matters – status report

Lyn Allen provided an update on current assessment matters.

Inpex will meet with DHAC in May to provide a briefing on the proposed development of a gas plant on Middle Arm. The Notice of Intent (NOI) for the proposed gas Plant at Middle Arm has been received and the proposal is likely it will be assessed at the EIS level. John Bailey and ECNT have already been briefed by Inpex.

10. ERG Report

Bob Wasson reported that ERG had recently held its strategic planning meeting during which it identified current research and gaps in knowledge. Prior to this, Bob met with Lyn Allen and Greg Leach to discuss how research could interface with the strategic thinking of government. The outcome of that meeting recommended aligning research/strategy efforts by the ERG with NRETA's Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) Plan.

An outcome of the ERG strategic planning day was a draft Research Plan. More work is required on the draft and an outline of the interactions between the Research plan and the INRM plan.

John Bailey said DHAC can advise the Minister on the priorities identified in the Research plan.

Action:

Bob Wasson to finalise Research Plan

11. Water Allocation Planning Update

Robyn Henderson reported there was potential for DHAC to take on the DRWAC (Darwin Region Water Allocation Committee) role. NRETA has been identified to provide funding to resource the project. A detailed update will be provided to DHAC at the proposed out of session meeting currently scheduled for 8 May.

12. Correspondence

ECNT sent an invite for DHAC to have a presence at World Environment Day, 1 June. The theme is "mobilise for change". DHAC attended last year and shared a stall with NRETA. Robyn Henderson checked whether members are happy to do this again.

There is potential to raise public awareness about the Review of the Plan of Management on the day.

Resolution:

DHAC will participate in World Environment Day as part of the NRETA stall

Action

DHAC to accept invitation to attend and coordinate stall / attendance logistics

13. Financial Report

Robyn Henderson presented the latest financial report.

14. Review of the Plan of Management – Update

Changes to the draft Plan from the last workshop have been incorporated and members were asked for their input. Confirmation was sought that comments have been interpreted appropriately. The Communication Strategy for the Plan is being prepared by Linda Kenny and a draft will be ready soon.

It is anticipated that government consultation will occur over April – May and community consultation will occur over June – July. (This may be revised following in depth consideration of the consultation strategy and project plan)

In terms of additional content and members' concerns, it's vital members make comment now or discuss them with Robyn following the meeting.

Action:

DHAC members to make final comments/input on the Plan

15. Other business

No other business.

16. Proposed Agenda Items for next meeting

It's proposed that the Chair of the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and Russell Willing (NRM Facilitator) will present at the next meeting.

Next regular meeting is for:

Thursday 12 June 2008, 1 - 4pm
(DCC Council Chambers)

Meeting closed 3.55pm

ACTION SHEET
Meeting 24
Thursday 10 April 2008

Agenda Number	Agenda Item Title	Action	Responsibility	Time frame	Status
5	Planning in the Darwin Harbour Region	Rod Applegate to provide copies of presentations on Strategic Planning of Middle Arm and Darwin Region	Chantal Caruso	ASAP	Available at this meeting
8	Larrakia Harbour Committee (LHC) Update	Web links to the UN Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change website will be sent to DHAC Members.	Chantal Caruso /Donna Jackson	By next meeting	
9	Larrakia Harbour Committee (LHC) Update	DHAC Members to consider LHC funding sources from within their networks.	DHAC members	By next meeting	For discussion
10	ERG Report	ERG Research Plan to be finalised	Bob Wasson	By next meeting	Outstanding
12	Correspondence	DHAC to accept invitation to attend World Environment Day and share a stall with NRETA	Chantal Caruso	ASAP	Completed
14	Review of the Plan of Management – Update	DHAC Members to provide final comments / input to the Plan	DHAC members	28 April 2008	Plan is being laid out and designed for consultation