



Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee

MINUTES FOR MEETING 26

Thursday 14th August 2008

1pm to 4pm

Meeting Room 1, Darwin City Council

1. Welcome And Apologies

Present:

| Name | Representing |
|------------------|--|
| Chris Makepeace | Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT |
| Luccio Cercareli | Local Government Association NT |
| Peter Ebsworth | Greening Australia NT |
| Bob Wasson | Charles Darwin University, Chair Ecosystem Research Group |
| Alastair Black | Darwin Port Corporation |
| Robyn Henderson | Environment, Heritage and the Arts – Project Coordinator, Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management |

Guest Speakers

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Michael Lawton | Director Environmental Management NRETA and Acting Chair, EMG |
| George Maly | Project Officer WQPP |
| Chris Wicks | Water Resource Planner, NRETA |

Apologies:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Prue Barnard | Australian Marine Conservation Society |
| Greg Bicknell | Chamber of Commerce NT |
| Lyn Allen | Executive Director, Environment Heritage & the Arts |

Mr John Bailey, independent chair, Donna Jackson, indigenous representative and Duncan Dean, community representative have resigned from DHAC since the last meeting. Letters of resignation are included in the correspondence file.

Bob Wasson advised that in the absence of a Chair he was willing to be an interim Chair. He would Chair the meetings and assist with urgent and important tasks.

Members discussed the way forward for DHAC and the next steps considering the abovementioned resignations and that a Minister has yet to be announced. Members recognised that there would be a period of time between the announcement of the Minister and the time when the Minister would be briefed and in a position to make decisions regarding DHAC. As a result there will be a lag time for appointing a new Chair and new members.

Members highlighted the lack of an indigenous representative on DHAC and the need for this sector of the community to be represented.

Members discussed and agreed that a letter to the new Minister, seeking a meeting should be prepared. A meeting with the new Minister would provide the opportunity for remaining DHAC members to discuss how they believe DHAC should operate and for DHAC to hear the Minister's views on the future of DHAC.

| ACTION |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Project Coordinator and the interim Chair are to prepare a letter to the Minister seeking a meeting to discuss the future operation of DHAC.2. Letters of thanks should be drafted to John, Duncan and Donna.3. A small informal DHAC meeting will be organised and held prior to meeting with the Minister to establish DHAC's position.4. Project Coordinator to provide DHAC ToR to members5. Chris Makepeace to prepare a proposal for new ToR for DHAC |

PREVIOUS BUSINESS

2. Acceptance Of Previous Minutes

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

Moved: Bob Wasson

Seconded: Peter Ebsworth

3. Action Sheet From Previous Meeting

3 Bob Wasson reported the ERG Research Paper is still being finalised.

#8 Chris Makepeace and Bob Wasson provided comments on the DRWAC terms of reference to Chris Wicks.

4. Waste Discharge Licences – conditions can they be more prescriptive?

Robyn Henderson, the Project Coordinator provided background to this agenda item. During the presentation by Mr Paul Heaton, Power Water Corporation (PWC), at the last DHAC meeting he indicated that the conditions on Waste Discharge Licences are not currently prescriptive. Mr Heaton also indicated that PWC may benefit from specific targets and welcomed DHAC to make comment or recommendations regarding the licence conditions.

Michael Lawton of Environment Heritage and the Arts, provided background on the waste discharge licences of PWC. The PWC waste discharges into the harbour from sewage treatment plants were established long prior to a formal licensing regime. The imposition of issuing 'ideal' waste discharge licences

and turning the existing discharge regime to best practice would require a great deal of money and could not be done quickly. When licences were first issued there was little known about the ambient water quality of the receiving waters and extent of the mixing zones associated with each outfall. The initial licences requested accurate information on the quality and quantity of the treated effluent that was discharged: how much, what and when, but the impact on receiving waters was little known. Mixing zones associated with each outfall needed to be established to determine appropriate monitoring points and much of this work has now been completed. Current discharge licences request, inter alia, demonstration of continuous improvement and PWC are working to tight deadlines, particularly for closing the Larrakeyah outfall.

In relation to benchmarks and targets, the Water Quality Protection Plan is establishing objectives for water quality (relevant for ecosystem protection, cultural values and recreational use) and the next steps are for a comprehensive monitoring program based on the agreed objectives.

DHAC members recognised that this was not a simple matter.

Michael Lawton indicated that he has the intention to discuss with Paul Heaton what PWC would find most useful. When asked about other jurisdictions Michael Lawton indicated that there are a range of approaches (eg load based) but that they all come down to a negotiated spatial temporal mixing zone where water quality objectives will not be met continuously.

Michael Lawton assured DHAC members that where new processing activities and waste discharges are considered, the regulators can ask for proponents to demonstrate why they have to discharge anything at all (this aligns with the agreed waste hierarchy also called up in licences) but with PWC they are dealing with an existing situation.

Currently the regulators are liaising closely with PowerWater. The regulators are closely involved in the Water Quality Protection Plan Project. Eric Valentine has been engaged by PWC to assist with hydrodynamic models for all outfalls inclusive of the discharge from Leanyer Sanderson ponds to Buffalo Creek.

Michael Lawton informed DHAC that he understood that PWC were in the process of developing a revised sewage strategy to replace the 1996 strategy.

DHAC members agreed that DHAC should be involved with the development of the Sewage Strategy and would like to be informed of what is going on.

ACTION

Paul Heaton is to be invited to a DHAC meeting to provide an overview of the planning process for the sewage strategy. Michael Lawton is to be invited to this meeting as well. (this action should be delayed until after DHAC has met with the new Minister.)

5. EMG Report

The EMG has not convened for some time but will be meeting soon on the next stage of the Water Quality Protection Plan.

6. Water Quality Protection Plan – Update

George Maly provided a paper which included the Water Quality Protection Plan (WQPP) Project methodology, WQPP priority research projects and the Community coastcare 2008 application for funding for stage 2 of the WQPP project. He also explained the process of the development of the remainder of the WQPP.

A consultant has been engaged to develop modelling tools.

Bob Wasson suggested that the priority research was an ambitious list.

The hydrodynamic model was discussed and it was established that there would be the capacity within Government or consultancies to run scenarios through the model and that DHAC could potentially request modelling of certain scenarios which will assist DHAC in decision making.

The researchers will be holding workshops and this will be an opportunity for DHAC to get involved so as to gain an understanding of what has been undertaken and where the knowledge gaps remain. Workshops may be held in November.

George Maly informed DHAC that the Australian Government are reviewing NHT and that Program Logic interpretation of NRM outcomes is being sought. George Maly has prepared a draft Program Logic for the Water Quality element of Darwin Harbour. He has used the Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management and the draft Strategic Framework to develop the Program Logic.

Chris Makepeace asked that the project consider the reporting cycle for the draft Strategic Framework for Managing Darwin Harbour. George Maly informed members that he has put forward the recommendation of a Healthy Waterways Report Card as part of the Caring for our Country Grants for the Water Quality Protection Plan. This could be used for DHAC reporting.

George provided further detail of the funding process for the WQPP project. The application for the Caring for our Country Coastcare 2008 grants had been prepared, provided to DHAC and lodged 29 July. An informal announcement is expected in October 2008 with a formal announcement in December 2008.

To summarise the stages of the WQPP:

- The priority research is still being completed;
- The development of a monitoring strategy is now the focus;
- A modelling strategy will be next.
- The draft WQPP will go to public consultation mid 2009
- Completion is expected at the end of 2009.

The Application for the Grant refers to Larrakia Nation and DHAC as contributors. George suggested that the Larrakia Sea Rangers could take on some of the monitoring.

DHAC will be invited to the EMG meeting and November workshops.

When asked, George indicated that the preferred approach for monitoring was that used by Queensland but that the EMG could come up with an alternative. Michael Lawton warned DHAC that resources may be a limiting factor to the version of monitoring chosen.

7. Water Allocation Planning – Update Chris Wicks

The job description for the additional NRETAS staff member to support DRWAC and some support to DHAC was tabled. DHAC was also advised that one to two days of Administration support from an AO3 or AO4 officer would be provided from the Water Management Branch.

Chris advised the committee that the process of establishing DRWAC had been slowed by both the election and the DHAC Chair's resignation. It is likely to take until late October to establish DRWAC aiming for the first meeting to occur before the end of the year.

As determined in consultation with DHAC the approach to be taken was that DHAC and DRWAC would have no commonality apart from similar membership and the committees talking to each other.

Chris explained that Ministerial approval would be sought to establish general DRWAC composition and member selection process. Ministerial approval will be required for individual members once final membership is decided as they are Ministerial appointment. DRWAC will continue on even if individual memberships lapse as the stakeholder group in question would be asked to nominate a new person. In relation to proposed DRWAC membership, one urban and one rural representative was planned; however, following Duncan's resignation, Chris is considering two rural representatives instead.

Chris also advised the committee that a community engagement expert, Sharna Nolan, CSIRO was coming on board. She is not a planner and would provide a separate report on community engagement.

Chris Makepeace and Bob Wasson had both provided comments on the ToR for DRWAC.

ACTION

Project Coordinator to acquire the latest ToR for DRWAC and recirculate to DHAC for final comments.

8. Review of the Plan of Management – Update – Robyn Henderson

Robyn briefed DHAC on the progress of the Review. The new draft Strategic Framework for Managing Darwin Harbour Region 2009-2013 and DHAC's Report on the Review of the Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management in final design and layout was brought to the June 2008 DHAC meeting. Prue provide a couple of suggestions that will be addressed when the document is released for public consultation. No other comments were received on the layout or design.

Consultation with NT Government Agencies and locals Councils within Darwin Harbour Catchment commenced on 10 July 2008. The consultation so far has comprised:

- Letters sent from the Chair to CEOs of the Stakeholder NT Government Agencies and local Councils (23 letters).
- Meetings between the Chair, Project Coordinator and CEOs of NT Government Agencies (3 meetings so far)
- Government Forum facilitated by the Project Coordinator (15 attendees from various agencies).
- Forum facilitated by the Project Coordinator with Department of Primary Industry Fisheries and Mines staff

Submissions have been requested by 15 August 2008; however, submissions will be accepted until 29 August 2008.

Key dates and Milestones for the project including public consultation were provided but these are now likely to change due to delays resulting from the change of Minister and the current lack of a Chair for DHAC.

Luccio suggested that there was no point in progressing work on the review until after DHAC has met with the Minister. The outcome of the meeting with the Minister may impact on the Strategic Framework.

9. Strategic/business planning DHAC

DHAC members agreed that strategic planning could not be considered until after the committee had met with the Minister. It was agreed that the topics suggested for discussion as outlined in the briefing paper could form the basis of discussions with the Minister:

- DHAC Role and Responsibility
- DHAC Terms of Reference
- DHAC membership
- Working relationships:
 - Minister
 - Department
- DHAC's role in relation to Plan of Management or draft Strategic Framework
- Inter relationship with DRWAC.

10. Current Environmental Impact Assessment matters – Status report

The draft guidelines for the INPEX proposal will go on public exhibition on Saturday 16 August 2008. Draft guidelines are available for comment for 14 days, and then the Minister has an additional 14 days to issue final guidelines.

Chris Makepeace highlighted that as INPEX will be drilling in the Harbour for testing purposes there may be public enquiries.

ACTION

Project Coordinator is to circulate the URL for the guidelines when available.

Chris Makepeace advised the committee that he had been told that the Notice of Intent for Arafura Resources for Alice Springs had been sent to the Federal Government during the election process and that a decision will be made soon.

11. Caring for Our Country

Robyn Henderson, the Project Coordinator, provided a summary of the DHAC workshop on the Caring for our Country grant program. On Thursday 10 July 2008 the workshop was held for DHAC and other interested stakeholders. The purpose of the workshop was to investigate opportunities for members to consider potential projects and partnerships that were suited to a Caring for our Country Funding Application – the new funding framework available under the Australian Government Caring for our Country program. Workshop participants discussed their priorities for work areas requiring funding and from there a number of potential applications were discussed to determine whether they fitted the framework and whether it was feasible for applications to be submitted.

Project Logic was then explained to the group.

John Bailey, the DHAC Chair, sent a number of letters on behalf of DHAC supporting a number of applications. These letters are included in the correspondence file. The applications supported are summarised below:

- *Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) training modules for the Darwin Region.* DPI
- *Water Quality Protection Plan for Darwin Harbour project.* NRETA
- *Trialling Bioindicators for Darwin Harbour.* NRETA
- *Control of invasive grasses in coastal wetlands of the Darwin Harbour Catchment.* Greening Australia NT
- *Australian Government: Caring for our Country Community Coastcare Grants 2008: Project Title: Building Resilience and Awareness of Coastal Communities for Coastal Erosion and Climate Change*

Adaptation: The Darwin Harbour Region "Strategic Coastal Management Plan Darwin City Council

- *Australian Government: Caring for our Country Open Grants 2008-2009*
Project Title: Coastal Erosion - Risk Assessment Mapping For Darwin Foreshores in a time of Climate Change Darwin City Council

Luccio questioned whether proposed letters of support should have been circulated to all DHAC members prior to being signed by the Chair indicating DHAC support.

Robyn Henderson explained that under other circumstances this would be the approach; however, the majority of projects supported were discussed at the DHAC workshop. The extremely short timeframe to submit applications precluded an internal DHAC consultation process and the Chair determined to provide support on behalf of DHAC.

Bob Wasson also advised that other proposals were applied for that were relevant to DHAC but that did not seek DHAC support.

12. Larrakia Harbour Committee (LHC) Update

Robyn Henderson, the Project Coordinator advised that following Chantal's departure and the resignation of Donna Jackson from DHAC no action had been undertaken regarding LHC. It is understood that the Larrakia Harbour Committee will continue to meet and Donna will continue to be involved. The future of LHC will need to be considered either during or after the meeting with the Minister.

13. Correspondence

Correspondence was tabled

14. Financial Report

The Project Coordinator tabled the financial report for the period.

15. Other business

Chris Makepeace indicated that following the meeting with the Minister he would be willing to meet informally with Chris Young to discuss Chamber of Commerce NT's involvement in DHAC and DRWAC.

Bob Wasson indicated that he is willing to Chair DHAC meetings and provide a minimum of support as an interim Chair. He is not willing to commit beyond this.

Next regular meeting is for:

Thursday 9 October 2008 1pm to 4pm – DCC Meeting Room 1

Note: This meeting date is likely to change.

Meeting closed 3.25pm

ACTION SHEET
Meeting 26
Thursday 14 August 2008

ATTACHMENT 2

| Agenda Number | Agenda Item Title | Action | Responsibility | Time frame | Status |
|----------------------|---|--|---|-------------------|--|
| 1 | Welcome and Apologies | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Project Coordinator and the interim Chair are to prepare a letter to the Minister seeking a meeting to discuss the future operation of DHAC. 2. Letters of thanks should be drafted to John, Duncan and Donna. 3. A small informal DHAC meeting will be organised and held prior to meeting with the Minister to establish DHAC's position. 4. Project Coordinator to provide DHAC ToR to members 5. Chris Makepeace to prepare a proposal for new ToR for DHAC | <p>RH and RW</p> <p>RH and RW</p> <p>RH and DHAC members</p> <p>RH CM</p> | Mid September | <p>Sent 15.09.08</p> <p>Sent 15.09.08</p> <p>Held 25.09.08</p> <p>Sent 20.08.08</p> <p>Sent 11.09.08</p> |
| 3 | ERG Report | 6. ERG Research Plan to be finalised | Bob Wasson | By next meeting | Finalised 2.10.08 |
| 4 | Waste Discharge Licences – conditions can they be more prescriptive | 7. Paul Heaton is to be invited to a DHAC meeting to provide an overview of the planning process for the sewage strategy. Michael Lawton is to be invited to this meeting as well. (this action should be delayed until after DHAC has met with the new Minister.) | RH | By next meeting | Informal request made, Formal request outstanding |
| 7 | Water Allocation Planning | 8. Project Coordinator to acquire the latest ToR for DRWAC and recirculate to DHAC for final comments. | RH | | Emailed 27 Aug 2008 |
| 10 | Current Environmental Impact Assessment matters | 9. Project Coordinator is to circulate the URL for the guidelines when available. | RH | By 18 August | Emailed 18 August |