

> DRMAC



*Caring for the future of our Daly*

Daly River  
Management Advisory  
Committee (DRMAC)  
**Annual Report 2007-08**



Northern Territory Government

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Environment, The Arts and Sport  
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The Hon Alison Anderson MLA  
Minister for Natural Resources, Environment  
and Heritage  
Parliament House  
DARWIN NT 0800

Dear Minister

On behalf of the Daly River Management Advisory Committee, I have pleasure  
in presenting the second Annual Report for the Committee for the year ended  
30 June 2008

Yours sincerely



JOHN CHILDS  
Chairman  
Daly River Management Advisory Committee

23 September 2008

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## **The Daly River Management Advisory Committee in Brief**

The Northern Territory Government established the Daly River Management Advisory Committee (DRMAC) in 2006 to develop options for the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources within the Daly River catchment.

The goal of DRMAC is to promote the highest standards of management of land, water and other resources in the region so that the important values people associate with the Daly are protected.

DRMAC will advise on the development of an adaptive management decision-making framework, which will be used to balance the needs of development and conservation in the catchment. The major issues DRMAC has focused on using this approach are native vegetation clearing and water resource management.

Membership of DRMAC includes representatives from the traditional landowners, production, tourism, recreation and conservation sectors and government.

## Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for DRMAC are to assess and advise the Northern Territory Government on:

1. Visions for healthy communities in the Daly River catchment and/or its sub-catchments, based on sustainable development
2. Land and resource use options and conservation strategies for delivering on those visions
3. Resource use or conservation management issues of particular concern to local and regional communities
4. Quality and relevance of information and analysis used to support identification and implementation of preferred development options and to inform decisions
5. Critical scrutiny of estimates of costs and benefits of different land use and management options
6. Design and maintenance of systems for monitoring all important values
7. Specific development and/or conservation plans for the region
8. Identification and application of best practice in land and resource use and conservation management
9. Options for legislative change to support improved management of natural resources at the regional scale, including approaches to community engagement

Matters considered by DRMAC, without limiting the above, may include:

1. Proposals for orthodox agricultural development, presented as scenarios (potential land use plans) backed by estimates of costs and benefits
2. Proposals for improved practice for management of important resources, including water allocation and use, cropping or other cultivation, and native vegetation
3. The configuration and role of the protected lands system in regional development
4. Identification of measures (indicators) of land and resource condition that are relevant to both producers and managers of protected lands
5. Design and implementation of monitoring systems, including land condition, status of flora and fauna, water quality, water availability, and water use
6. Reviews of monitoring data and identification of effective responses to evidence of adverse change
7. Methods for improved management of lands set aside for conservation, and especially riparian and other buffers around important vegetation types
8. Processes and incentives for landholder involvement in conservation actions
9. Social issues raised by programs, plans or strategies for management of wildlife and conservation of biodiversity, including impacts on the Aboriginal customary economy
10. Commercial incentives for conservation of landscapes, communities and species, especially through sustainable tourism but including other sustainable use of natural resources
11. Management plans and programs for individual parks and reserves or other conservation assets, including essential habitats, threatened communities and species, and harvested communities and species
12. Principles and practice for inclusion in property management plans
13. Reviews of relevant legislation

## DRMAC Membership and Meetings

DRMAC consists of 13 members appointed by the Minister. Membership is for three years, and members can be reappointed.

### Membership of DRMAC as at 30 June 2008:

Mr John Childs	Chairman
Mr Dan Thomson	Represents non-Indigenous Landowners and the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
Mr John Eddy	Represents non-Indigenous landowners and the Northern Territory Horticultural Association
Ms Mona Liddy	Represents Indigenous landowners and the Daly Region Aboriginal Reference Group
Mr William Hewitt	Represents Indigenous landowners and the Daly Region Aboriginal Reference Group
Mr Gary Higgins	Represents the Northern Territory Tourism Industry and the Katherine Region Tourist Association
Mr Warren de With	Represents Recreation/Fishing interests and the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory
Dr Stuart Blanch	Represents Conservation interests and was nominated by the Environment Centre of the Northern Territory
Mr Bruce Sawyer	Government representative for Primary Industry
Mr Ian Lancaster	Government representative for Water Management
Vacant	Government representative for Conservation and Recreation
Mr Mark Meldrum	Government representative for Land Use Planning
Vacant	Government representative for Regional Development Planning
Ms Darlene Lion	Executive Officer

**Change in Membership**

In March 2008, Mr Joe Martin-Jard tendered his resignation as Government representative for Regional Development Planning.

In May 2008, Mr John de Koning tendered his resignation as Government representative for Conservation and Recreation.

**Committee meetings held during 2007-08**

Meeting	Date	Location
5th Meeting	9 and 10 August 2007	Darwin Airport Resort
6th Meeting	10 and 11 December 2007	Knotts Crossing Resort, Katherine
7th Meeting	5 and 6 March 2008	Darwin Airport Resort
8 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	26 and 27 June 2008	Knotts Crossing Resort, Katherine

## **Katherine Water Advisory Committee**

The Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage formed the Katherine Water Advisory Committee (KWAC) on 9 February 2007 as a sub-committee of the Daly River Management Advisory Committee (DRMAC).

KWAC is responsible for advising the Northern Territory Government, through DRMAC, on matters relating to the management of water resources within the Katherine Water Control District, and assisting in the development and review of the Katherine/Tindall Water Allocation Plan. This has included the determination of water allocations to the beneficial uses under the Northern Territory *Water Act*. KWAC has also focused on recommendations for granting licences to take groundwater from the Katherine Water Control District and the conditions contained in such licences.

The draft Water Allocation Plan for the Tindall Limestone Aquifer, within the Katherine Water Control District, was released for public comment in June 2008. It is expected to have the final Plan declared by the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage in late 2008.

KWAC membership includes the Katherine Mayor as Chair and members from a range of stakeholder groups including pastoral, indigenous, tourism and community. During 2007-08 meetings were held monthly at the Katherine Town Council.

## **Achievements for the Year**

DRMAC's achievements for the year included:

### **Ministerial Advice**

DRMAC met with the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage to discuss land clearing, water management and other natural resources issues in the Daly River catchment.

### **Land Clearing in the Daly River Catchment**

The Northern Territory Government extended the land clearing moratorium in the Daly River catchment to March 2010 to allow for further scientific research. In accordance with this decision, DRMAC continues to commission and oversee the conduct of appropriate research projects in the catchment.

DRMAC has continued refining the Land Clearing Guidelines for the Daly River catchment. This has involved monitoring and providing advice on land clearing applications outside the focal area within the catchment and further development of the adaptive management framework for natural resource management.

### **Katherine Water Advisory Committee**

DRMAC assisted the Katherine Water Advisory Committee (KWAC) in the development of the draft Water Allocation Plan for the Tindall Limestone Aquifer (Katherine) and endorsed the release of the draft Plan for public comment. DRMAC will present the final Plan to the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage in late 2008.

The development of this draft Plan was a major achievement for KWAC, and now provides a model for water management planning of the highest standard. This Plan addresses the major issues of sustainable development and use, adaptive management, environmental protection, capacity to respond to climate change and variability, cultural heritage and the needs of multiple users.

### **Water Advisory Committee for the Ooloo Aquifer**

In August 2007, DRMAC agreed to act as the Water Allocation Committee for the Ooloo aquifer. DRMAC will consult extensively with users of the Ooloo aquifer and the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group in the development of the draft Plan which is expected to be completed in 2009.

### **Conservation Plan for the Daly River Catchment**

DRMAC recommended the development of a Conservation Plan for the Daly River Catchment as an essential component of sustainable management of the natural resources of the catchment.

In June 2008, DRMAC agreed to act as a Reference Group for the Conservation Plan and to assist in consulting with stakeholder groups. The Conservation Plan will be a priority for DRMAC in 2008-09.

## **Community Consultation**

DRMAC visited properties and country in the Daly River catchment, consulted with representatives of key stakeholder groups and invited landowners and organisations to make presentations on matters of importance. Key organisations and the community were also consulted in the development of the adaptive management process.

DRMAC has received valuable local information for the development of resource management plans and recommendations. In supporting appropriate and proper behaviour by researchers in the catchment, DRMAC has and continues to advise research organisations on how to obtain the required permits and cooperation from local landholders.

## **Research in the Daly**

DRMAC contributed to the planning and conduct of major research projects through participating in project steering committees, and other consultative processes, used in research projects. Through this contribution, DRMAC aims to enhance research effectiveness and the productive adoption of research findings supported and undertaken by research organisations.

DRMAC has overseen all research conducted in the Daly River Catchment and provided proposals for investment in research to support the development of sustainable resource management policies and practices. A number of these proposals for research are now being implemented.

DRMAC will also oversee and report on the results of projects, which are monitoring land and water use and condition, as it implements the adaptive management framework in the Daly River Catchment.

## **Acknowledgements**

DRMAC would like to express gratitude to the Katherine Water Advisory Committee (KWAC) for their hard work in developing the draft Water Allocation Plan for the Tindall Limestone Aquifer (Katherine), the stakeholder organisations represented on DRMAC for their participation and feedback and all individuals who committed their time and efforts towards meetings.

DRMAC would also like to thank staff of the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts, the Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mines and the Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development who provided information and assistance for the meetings.

In particular DRMAC wishes to thank Executive staff who support DRMAC for their ability to maintain the highly effective operation of the Committee.

With this ongoing support, DRMAC will continue to promote the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources within the Daly River catchment.