

DALY RIVER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING RECORD FOR

MEETING 2: 25 – 27 OCTOBER 2006

Conference Room of the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and
Heritage, 5th Floor Parliament House, Darwin

Meeting Room, Douglas Daly Research Farm

Present

Committee Member	Committee Role
John Childs	Chair
Dan Thomson	Represent Non-Indigenous landowners and the NT Cattlemen's Association
John Eddy	Represent Non-Indigenous landowners and the NT Horticultural Association
Gary Higgins	Represent Tourism and the Katherine Region Tourism Association
Mona Liddy	Represent Indigenous Landowners and the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group
William Hewitt	Represent Indigenous Landowners and the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group
Warren de With	Represent Recreation/ Fishing interests and the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT
Stuart Blanch	Represent Conservation interests and the Environment Centre of the NT
Bruce Sawyer	Government Primary Industries
Ian Lancaster	Government Water Manager
John de Koning (25 October)	Government Conservation and Recreation Manager
Mark Meldrum	Government Land Use Planner
Darlene Lion	DRMAC Executive Officer

Bill Freeland, GHD, attended the meeting for Agenda Item 4.

Peter Whitehead, Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts, attended the meeting for Agenda Item 7.1.

Apologies

John de Koning (26-27 October only)	Government Conservation and Recreation Manager
Linda Fazledeen	Government Regional Development Planner

Meeting with the Minister

The Daly River Management Advisory Committee (DRMAC) met with the Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, Ms Marion Scrymgour MLA from 9 – 10 am on 25 October 2006. DRMAC's work plans and activities were discussed.

Visits to Farms

The DRMAC spent the afternoon of 25 October and part of the morning of 26 October 2006 visiting a range of farms in the Douglas Daly and talking with farmers about land clearing and water management on their properties.

Meeting with Local Residents at the Township of Fleming

DRMAC met with local residents and community representatives on the evening of 26 October at the Township of Fleming and discussed issues of concern to them and of interest to the Committee.

Meeting at the Douglas Daly Research Farm 26 - 27 October 2006

1. Welcome

The Committee thanked the farmers who provided a tour of their properties and gave up their time to talk to the Committee, including:

- Mr Ian McBean of Bonalbo
- Mr Murray Johnson, Manager of Whynot Station
- Mr Mick Courtney, Manager of Kingfisher Station
- Mr Phil Howie of Maneroo
- Mr Brett Gill of Malilangwe and Manager of Early Storms
- Mr Peter O'Brien, Manager of Douglas Daly Research Farm
- Mr Phil Hausler, Extension Officer, Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines for organising the Tour.

The Committee also expressed their appreciation to the Douglas Daly Playgroup Association and the Douglas Daly Community Development Association for organising the catering for the barbeque at the Township of Fleming.

2. Previous Meeting

2.1 Meeting Record

The Meeting Record for Meeting 1 was accepted.

2.2 Action Sheet and progress on items

The Action Sheet for Meeting 1 was accepted.

3. Closed Discussion

As items discussed under this agenda item are confidential, a record of the Closed Discussion is not included in this Meeting Record.

4. Presentation and Discussion

Adaptive Management of Ecologically Sustainable Development of the Douglas Daly Region Project.

On behalf of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association (NTCA), Bill Freeland of GHD Pty Ltd provided an overview of the NTCA's Project, *Adaptive Management of Ecologically Sustainable Development of the Douglas Daly Region*.

Action

- A copy of the NTCA Report is to be sent to DRMAC members.

5. Land Clearing Issue

5.1 Review of Land Clearing Information

The Committee reviewed agenda paper 5.1, Briefing on Land Clearing, and associated maps provided for reference. Further information requested by the Committee are listed as action items.

Action

- Arrange an overlay of cleared areas on the soil types map.
- In the briefing section *public notification of land clearing applications*, include information relating to pastoral land use.
- In the section *economic assessment*, values to be provided in a table
- In the section *invasive plants*, include information about the draft management plan for gamba grass.
- In the section *invasive animals*, more comprehensive information is to be provided, and also should include information about the Wagiman peoples feral animals management program.
- In the section *biodiversity Impacts/ conservation agreements*, add a note that there are other views on protection of conservation values besides those documented in the briefing.
- Add information about carbon release as a result of land clearing, including if possible carbon release per hectare.
- Provide any available data on erosion, including information on recorded soil movement if it is available.
- Provide information about management practices and their impact on soil type if available (eg tilling).
- Provide papers on management practices and their effects in the NT.
- Investigate whether any intensive biodiversity surveys have been conducted in the Daly Catchment and provide information/ sources of survey results.

- In the section *use of felled timber*, include information on the potential use of the felled timber.
- In the section *monitoring and compliance of land clearing on freehold and pastoral land*, provide more comprehensive information relating to monitoring, compliance and prosecutions.

5.2 Interim Development Control Order on Land Clearing Update

An update on was provided on the proposed Interim Development Control Order on land clearing.

5.3 DRMAC Land Clearing Action Plan

DRMAC reviewed the current NT Government Land Clearing Guidelines with a view to drafting Guidelines with specific reference to the Daly River Catchment. Suggested changes to the Guidelines are listed as action items.

Action

- DRMAC to consider whether there is a requirement for more intensive information on flora and fauna to be included in applications for clearing. Stuart Blanch and Ian Lancaster to meet with John Woinarski to investigate the adequacy of flora and fauna data for the Catchment.
- Ensure the introductory sections in the Guidelines are specific to the Daly.
- The introductory sections should include considering the cumulative impacts.
- Information on good ecological practice should be included, eg joining up corridors, looking at areas previously cleared inappropriately with a view to restoring them, consider revegetating drainage lines previously cleared.
- In Section 7, state that a property management plan will be required for the clearing approval process. The plan will cover development and management elements, including environmental management.
- In Section 8.2, include:
 - photos to assist in determining stream order;
 - stream order numbers for Katherine, Edith, Ferguson Rivers and the other major waterways in the Daly River Catchment and buffer widths for them;
 - a map of the Daly with the rivers and stream order numbers on each of them.
- In Section 10:
 - provide information regarding firebreaks
 - expand on management practice where possible
 - specify what the 'right conditions' are relating to erosion occurring on slopes less than 1 %.
- In Section 11:
 - Change linear developments to plain English
 - Specify when a permit is required for clearing for subdivisions in the Daly River Catchment.

- In Section 4.4, reword the requirement to check sacred sites with AAPA to encourage people to check for them.

6. DRMAC Water Use and Management Action Plan

6.1 Water Issues List

DRMAC identified the key issues related to water management. Information and advice on the issues were requested for the next meeting.

The issues identified were:

- extraction – how much, where, groundwater and surface water
- metering and monitoring
- knowledge gaps eg metering
- knowledge of the resource, including of groundwater and surface water interactions
- illogical distribution of annual pumping – matching pumping with use and need
- existing and proposed licences, ie in relation to structure of licences, number of licences, volume, numbers pending
- flow gauging on unmonitored rivers - current monitoring
- water quality
- sedimentation and erosion
- water flora and fauna – what impacts on it
- sources of the water – where from, dry season flows
- groundwater dependant ecosystems
- application of the National Water Initiative to the Daly eg Katherine allocation level
- cultural flows
- conservation values
- legalities of ownership of the water at a Federal and State Level
- salt water – distance up stream
- consequences of climate change
- consequences of fertiliser, pesticides, herbicides, increased soil fertility
- man made impacts on water eg Mt Todd, sewerage treatment, old mines
- 80/ 20 % rule in relation to water allocation
- water allocation planning update – in Daly Catchment, NT and interstate
- water pricing
- water trading
- impact on the estuary
- flood harvesting
- catchment water balances
- aquaculture

Action

- Provide information on water management issues identified by DRMAC.

6.2 Katherine Subregion Water Allocation Planning Update

Ian Lancaster provided an update on the establishment of the Katherine Water Allocation Committee (KWAC). Ian advised that the Committee is to be established by the end of the year and will commence meeting early 2007. The Committee will comprise 12 voting members representing major stakeholder groups. Applications for water licences will not be processed until a water allocation plan is in place. The Committee will report to DRMAC.

Action

- Forward the KWAC Terms of Reference to DRMAC members.

7 Reports/ Information Papers

7.1 Presentation on Adaptive Management

Peter Whitehead, Senior Policy Officer for the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and Arts, provided a presentation on Adaptive Management and its application in natural resource management.

7.2 Landscape Design for Maintaining Ecosystems Services in Tropical Agricultural Landscapes – Steering Committee Update

A paper outlining the Landscape Design project was tabled for the agenda item. Mona Liddy and John Eddy are the DRMAC representatives on the project Steering Committee. Mona Liddy advised DRMAC on the first Steering Committee meeting for the project.

7.3 Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group Update

Mona Liddy and William Hewitt briefly introduced the report *An Indigenous Management Framework for the Daly River Catchment* by the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group. A presentation on the report will be provided at the next meeting.

7.4 Daly River Current Research List and Bibliography

Updated versions of the Daly River Current Research List and Daly River Bibliography were tabled for information and comment.

8 Communication

8.1 Community Engagement

A package of concepts for DRMAC promotion materials were tabled for information.

It was agreed that:

- DRMAC will use the slogan “Caring for the future of our Daly”
- DRMAC will use the blue concept for its marketing and promotion materials.

8.2 Community Engagement

A revised version of the DRMAC Communications Plan was tabled and noted.

8.3 DRCRG Fly Through Video

The video on the Daly River produced for the Daly River Community Reference Group was made available for DRMAC members to view.

9 Next Meeting

9.1 Next Meeting Date

It was agreed that the next DRMAC meeting would be held in March 2007 in Katherine. While in Katherine, DRMAC will also meet with local landholders and community representatives.