

DALY RIVER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING RECORD FOR

MEETING 6: 10 – 11 December 2007

Knotts Crossing Resort

Katherine

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	Government Conservation and Recreation Manager
Joe Martin-Jard	Government Regional Development Planner
Mark Meldrum	Government Land Use Planner
Darlene Lion	DRMAC Executive Officer

Members of the Katherine Water Advisory Committee attended the meeting for Agenda Item 6.1, including Ann Shepherd (Chair), Mick Jerram and Peter Sinnott.

Presentations

Brett Easton and Athina Pascoe-Bell, Department of Natural Resources Environment and the Arts (NRETA), attended the meeting for Agenda 4.1 to provide a presentation.

Keith Bristow and Jeff Camkin, The North Australian Futures Project, attended the meeting for Agenda Item 5 to provide a presentation.

Bob Hansen, Managing Director PCA: Peanut Company of Australia, attended the meeting for Agenda Item 7 to provide a presentation. PCA Farm Manager, Andrew Simon, also attended the meeting for this agenda item.

Day 1: 10 December 2007

1. Welcome

1.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Joe Martin-Jard for Day 1 of the meeting and Dan Thomson for Day 2 of the meeting.

2. Previous Meeting

2.1 Meeting Record

The Meeting Record for Meeting 5 was accepted by DRMAC.

2.2 Action Sheet

Action Item 9.2, the project Landscape Design for Maintaining Ecosystem Services, was discussed.

Action

It was agreed that DRMAC would write to the Biodiversity Conservation Division of NRETA to advise that DRMAC would like the project Steering Committee to meet as soon as possible and before any experimental treatments are finalised, and to be kept informed of project developments. DRMAC will request a briefing on the project be provided at the next meeting.

The Action Sheet for Meeting 5 was accepted.

3. Closed Discussion - member Issues

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

4. Land Clearing Issue

4.1 Presentation - Native Vegetation Cascade Assessment Process

Brett Easton and Athina Pascoe-Bell provided a presentation on the application of the cascade assessment process in the Daly River Catchment.

5. Presentation – the North Australian Irrigation Futures Project

Keith Bristow and Jeff Camkin provided presentations on their work for the North Australian Irrigation Futures project. Keith Bristow discussed irrigation and the need to manage salt and drainage, including in Northern Australia. Keith Camkin talked about his work in developing an ecologically sustainable development framework and its application to the Burdekin in Queensland.

6. Water Management Issue

6.1 Katherine Subregion Water Allocation Planning Update

Ian Lancaster provided an update on the Katherine water allocation planning process and talked broadly about the information that will be included in the Tindall Limestone Aquifer (Katherine) Water Allocation Plan.

The development of the plan was discussed with the members of the Katherine Water Allocation Committee (KWAC) present at the meeting. John Childs advised the KWAC Chair that when the water allocation plan is forwarded to the DRMAC for comment, it would be useful if a letter from the KWAC is forwarded with the plan outlining any particular issues or concerns for the KWAC in relation to water allocation and in the process of developing the plan.

John Childs also advised that any changes or comments made to the water allocation plan by DRMAC will be forwarded back to the KWAC for consideration.

Day 2: 11 December 2007

6.2 Water Allocation Planning Ooloo Aquifer

Ian Lancaster tabled information on water extraction licences for the Ooloo aquifer as requested at Meeting 5.

DRMAC discussed how it would progress water allocation planning for the Ooloo aquifer. It was agreed that DRMAC will use the same framework used for the Tindall Limestone Aquifer. At the next meeting, meeting 7, DRMAC will consider what is known about the Aquifer and will develop a list of information required to develop the plan to be provided at meeting 8.

Action

Ian Lancaster to provide information about the Ooloo Aquifer for the next DRMAC meeting, with emphasis on recharge rates and processes, water movement and flows in the aquifer, and contribution to Daly River flows.

At meeting 8, DRMAC will consider issues in relation to water allocation planning and commence developing rules for allocation. DRMAC will also plan a community meeting to consult about rules for water allocation planning.

Potential conflict of interest was discussed as some members of DRMAC require water allocation from the Ooloo Aquifer. It was noted that DRMAC will

advise on allocation generally and will not make individual allocations. It was agreed that conflicts of interest should also be declared.

7. Presentation – Development Proposal

The Managing Director of PCA, Peanut Company of Australia, Bob Hansen, provided a presentation on PCA's development proposal and water allocation requirement.

8. Presentation – Development Proposal

On advice from Tipperary Station, the scheduled presentation by the Manager, Tipperary Group of Properties, was cancelled.

9. Discussion on Presentations

There was no discussion for this agenda item.

10. Subdivision Issue

The briefing papers provided for information were noted, including *Subdivision Under the Planning Act* and *Subdivision Under the Planning Act: Supplementary Information*.

It was suggested that DRMAC could develop a land use plan for the Daly for reference under the NT Planning Act. The plan could inform developers, investors and the community of the government's vision for the region and would provide the basis for coordinating and evaluating development including subdivision.

It was suggested that DRMAC develop regional plans focusing on the pressure points in the Daly, such as the Douglas Daly, rather than doing a plan for the catchment.

Action

Mark Meldrum will provide for the next meeting an outline of the content of a regional development plan and the issues to be addressed.

11. Reports/ Information Papers

11.1 DRMAC Issues Paper

The revised draft of the DRMAC Issues Paper was reviewed.

The sections on alternative agricultural practice, the development of a knowledge management system for the Daly River Catchment and the environmental impact of gamba grass were discussed.

It was suggested that DRMAC could recommend that:

- (i) the use of gamba grass not be recommended or supported in any property development applications submitted; and
- (ii) the new use of gamba grass be discouraged; and
- (iii) gamba grass be managed under a weed management plan.

Action

John Childs will draft a letter to the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage regarding gamba grass, which will also mention the Natural Resource Management Board investment in the weeds management program through the regional investment strategy.

A letter to the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries will be drafted advising of DRMAC's interest in agricultural systems and practices which reduce the use of chemicals and their contamination of ground and surface waters, asking what research they are conducting on such systems and practices and seeking information on what research they propose to conduct on minimising chemical use in agriculture.

John Childs will draft a letter to Tropical Savannas CRC asking that Dr Peter Jacklyn brief the next meeting of DRMAC on the knowledge systems it has developed and is using, the plans for future use of these systems and the potential for use of these knowledge systems in the Daly River Catchment.

A letter will be sent to NRETA asking that a draft plan for a knowledge management system for management of water in the Daly River Catchment be provided to the next meeting of DRMAC.

11.2 Plans for Natural Resource Management Legislation

The briefing provided on developments relating to new natural resources management legislation was noted.

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

Discussed under Agenda Item 2.2 Action Sheet.

11.4 Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group Update

Mona Liddy and William Hewitt talked about the recent meeting of the Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG). John Childs attended the meeting to talk about DRMAC. John advised that the ARG expressed interest in showing DRMAC points of interest on their country.

Mona Liddy advised that the ARG facilitator's position is to be re-advertised.

Mona and William met with Stuart Blanch about developing a funding submission for promoting the work of the ARG.

11.5 WWF & ECNT Action Plan to Conserve the Daly as a Living River

Stuart Blanch briefly presented to DRMAC the *World Wildlife Fund & Environment Centre of the NT Action Plan to Conserve the Daly as a Living River*.

12. Communication

12.1 Community Engagement

DRMAC discussed the feedback from the Minister's trip to the Daly region. John reiterated the need for DRMAC to consult and keep people informed of DRMAC's work.

Action

DRMAC Executive Officer to arrange another newsletter for DRMAC to distribute.

12.2 New Business

No new business was discussed at the meeting.

13. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held early in March 2008 in Darwin.