

DALY RIVER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING RECORD FOR

MEETING 7: 5 – 6 March 2008

Darwin Airport Resort

Present

Committee Member	Committee Role
John Childs	Chair
Dan Thomson – Morning of Day 1 only	Represent Non-Indigenous landowners and the NT Cattlemen's Association
Gary Higgins – Day 1 only	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
Ann Stephens	Proxy for Mark Meldrum, Government Land Use Planner
Darlene Lion	DRMAC Executive Officer
Apologies	
John de Koning	Government Conservation and Recreation Manager
Joe Martin-Jard	Government Regional Development Planner
Mark Meldrum	Government Land Use Planner
John Eddy	Represent Non-Indigenous landowners and the NT Horticultural Association

The Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage, the Hon. Len Kiely MLA and Senior Adviser, Kieran Phillips, attended the meeting for Agenda Item 4 to meet with DRMAC.

Presentations

Tony Griffiths and Alistair Stewart from Biodiversity Conservation, Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (NRETA) attended the meeting for Agenda Item 7 to provide a presentation.

Steve Tickell and Des Yinfoo, NRETA, attended the meeting for Agenda Items 8.5 and 8.6 to provide a presentation.

Neil Collier, Hmalan Hunter-Xenie and Stephen Garnett, Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge (TRaCK), attended the meeting for Agenda Item 11 to provide a presentation.

Day 1: 5 March 2008

1. Welcome

1.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from John De Koning, John Ety, Mark Meldrum and Joe Martin-Jard.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Ann Stephens as proxy for Mark Meldrum.

2. Previous Meeting

2.1 Meeting Record

The Meeting Record for Meeting 6 was accepted by DRMAC.

2.2 Action Sheet

For Action Item 11.1 relating to the letter to the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage regarding gamba grass, Dan Thomson asked that it be noted that the NT Cattlemens Association does not support the declaration of gamba grass as a weed and a ban on its use.

For Action Item 11.1 relating to the knowledge system of the Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre, John Childs advised that he has talked to Dr Peter Jacklyn about the CRC Knowledge System.

Action

DRMAC requested that Peter Jacklyn be invited to provide a presentation to DRMAC about the Knowledge System used the by the Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre.

All other outstanding action items are to be followed up.

3. Prepare for Meeting with the Minister

The Chair advised that the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage, the Hon Len Kiely MLA, would attend the meeting from 9am to 10am to meet with DRMAC.

DRMAC discussed the issues that they would talk to the Minister about, including the extension of the land clearing moratorium and clearing in the Daly River Catchment outside the moratorium area.

4 Meet with Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage, the Hon Len Kiely MLA

DRMAC met with the Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, the Hon Len Kiely MLA, and his Senior Advisor, Mr Kieran Phillips.

The Minister advised that it was a pleasure to be appointed as Minister for Natural Resources and Environment. The Minister thanked the Committee for their work on water allocation and advised that he was looking forward to receiving further advice from DRMAC.

DRMAC discussed a range of issues with the Minister including the role of DRMAC, clearing in the Daly River Catchment outside the moratorium area, the application of the cascade assessment process, land values, the relationship between clearing and water availability, prospects and processes for lifting the moratorium and native vegetation legislation or similar natural resource management framework for regulation and forestry.

To further improve the flow of information between DRMAC and the Minister, the Chair suggested that DRMAC would in future make a personal presentation as well as provide written advice.

The Minister also suggested that he was happy to meet with DRMAC regularly at their meetings.

Action

Executive Officer to liaise with the Minister's office regarding the meeting dates for upcoming DRMAC meetings.

5. 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.

6. Land Clearing Issue

6.1 Discussion on Land Clearing Issue Developments

Issues relating to this agenda item were discussed under agenda items 3 - 5.

Dan Thomson advised of his withdrawal from DRMAC effective immediately. Dan advised that he would not accept the Minister's position of halting clearing based on limited baseline data and could not be seen as legitimising the government's decision by participating in DRMAC.

Concerns were raised with Dan about the withdrawal of his personal expertise and understanding of the agricultural industries and of the representation for the NT Cattlemens Association. DRMAC would need to use other ways to obtain information on the agricultural and pastoral sector in conducting its business.

The Chair asked the DRMAC members to consider other possible options for representation of pastoral and agricultural sectors.

7. Presentation – Landscape Design Project

Tony Griffiths and Alistair Stewart from Biodiversity Conservation, NRETA, provided a presentation on the project Landscape Design for Maintaining Ecosystems Services in Tropical Agricultural Landscapes.

The representative of the Conservation and Environment sector raised a concern about potential clearing of native vegetation for the purposes of the research. He felt that the study could be conducted on a site outside the moratorium area that has been approved for clearing for another land use.

In response, DRMAC were advised that clearing for the research would provide the necessary conditions for a proper scientific study to be conducted on the long term impacts of clearing in the Daly.

8. Water Management Issue

8.1 Katherine Subregion Water Allocation Planning Update

Ian Lancaster presented the draft Water Allocation Plan: Tindall Limestone Aquifer (Katherine) for DRMAC's consideration. DRMAC reviewed the draft Plan and suggested changes to be included in the Plan for the KWAC to consider at their next meeting.

A final draft of the Water Allocation Plan will be made available for public review by mid April 2008. Comments from the public review will be incorporated into the Plan and reviewed by the KWAC in time for DRMAC to consider it at their June 2008 meeting.

Ian Lancaster will also seek feedback on the Water Allocation Plan from the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG) at their next meeting on 18 -19 March 2008.

The Chair commended the Katherine Water Allocation Committee (KWAC) for their work on the Plan.

Actions

The Chair will write to the KWAC to thank it for the work on the Water Allocation Plan.

Ian Lancaster will provide the final draft of the Water Allocation Plan: Tindall Limestone Aquifer (Katherine) for DRMAC's consideration at the next DRMAC meeting,

8.2 Issuing of Water Extraction Licences for Lower Daly

Ian Lancaster advised that the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group will consider the non-licenced extraction of water across Malak-Malak land in the lower Daly area. Mona Liddy advised that the issue is currently on hold pending the resolution of other pressing issues.

Action

Ian Lancaster will provide a briefing on non-licenced extraction of water in the lower Daly area for the next DRMAC meeting.

8.3 Draft proposal for irrigation research in the Daly

Ian Lancaster advised that the Northern Australian Irrigation Futures (NAIF) project has forwarded a research proposal to the National Program for Sustainable Irrigation to investigate solute movement under irrigation in the Daly.

8.4 Economic, Social and Cultural Values of the Daly

Ian Lancaster advised that Cabinet has requested that an economic, social and cultural assessment of the value of the Daly River Catchment be developed. NRETA is investigating whether CSIRO will be able to do the assessment.

9. Reports/ Information Papers

9.1 Workshop Proposal: Development of a Component Tree System

Ian Lancaster advised DRMAC of the proposal to schedule a one day workshop in May 2008 to discuss NAIF ecologically sustainable development component trees application to the Daly River Catchment between DRMAC and CSIRO, as detailed in agenda item 9.1.

9.2 Natural Resource Management Legislation

DRMAC noted the briefing provided for agenda item 9.2.

9.3 Daly Conservation Plan Update

DRMAC noted the briefing provided for agenda item 9.3.

DRMAC asked that it be noted that it would like to provide input into the planning process. The ARG members stated that the ARG would also like to provide input into it.

Action

DRMAC requested that the project officer appointed to work on the Conservation Plan be invited to the next DRMAC meeting to provide a briefing.

9.4 TRaCK Update

DRMAC noted the TRaCK research projects update provided for agenda item 9.4.

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

A project update was provided through the presentation for agenda item 7. Mona Liddy advised that the Steering Committee met a week ago, however Mona was not able to attend the meeting.

9.6 Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group Update

Mona Liddy advised that the ARG facilitator's position has been advertised and that she has been appointed to the position in the interim. Mona advised DRMAC of the current ARG focus and activities. The next ARG meeting is scheduled 18 – 19 March 2008.

Day 2: 6 March 2008

8.6 Presentation – The Ooloo Aquifer

Steve Tickell and Des Yinfoo from Land and Water Division, NRETA, provided a presentation on the Ooloo Aquifer.

8.7 Water Allocation Planning Ooloo Aquifer

DRMAC compiled a list of information requirements for water allocation planning for the Ooloo Aquifer.

Action

DRMAC requested the following information be provided for meeting 8:

- Representation of the Ooloo aquifer model
- A map showing the location of the monitoring points and existing bores
- Figures of water quantities, including for high and low rainfall years
- A map of the potential irrigation areas
- Modelling of possible extraction rates
- Water areas which are important for the ARG
- Historical figures for climate and stream gauging
- Estimates on current extraction rates.

10 Subdivision Issue

10.1 Regional Development Plan Framework

DRMAC discussed the purpose of a regional plan and decided a regional development plan for the Daly is not required at this stage.

DRMAC discussed applications submitted to the Pastoral Land Board for change of use of pastoral land and subdivision.

Action

DRMAC will write to the Chief Executive of NRETA to request to see development applications for land in the Daly submitted with the Pastoral Land Board.

11 TRaCK – Scenario Planning Update

Neil Collier from Charles Darwin University provided a presentation on proposed scenarios for modelling based on the outcomes of visioning and scenario exercises completed by DRMAC at the August 2007 DRMAC Research Forum. DRMAC members participated in providing information for the next stage of scenario development.

12 Communication

12.1 Community Engagement

DRMAC discussed producing another newsletter. It was felt that it was important to state DRMAC's role in relation to the moratorium and to describe DRMAC's work on water allocation planning. Information will also be provided on water monitoring points in the Daly and the TRaCK program.

DRMAC also discussed ensuring that consultation with local people and stakeholders is integral to the water allocation planning process for the Ooloo aquifer.

Action

DRMAC Executive Officer to arrange the production and distribution of a DRMAC newsletter.

12.2 New Business

Interim Development Control Order

Ann Stephens advised land clearing permits are issued under the *Planning Act*. An Interim Development Control Order (IDCO) is a device under the Act. The Minister for Planning and Lands, the Hon Delia Lawrie MLA, has issued an IDCO dated 21 February 2008 to prohibit native vegetation clearing and subdivision for mixed farm developments in the moratorium area, with exemptions as declared under the IDCO. The order is for 2 years and cannot be immediately renewed. There has to be an interval of 3 months before it can be renewed.

13. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held early in June 2008 in Katherine.

The August/ September 2008 meeting will be held in the Douglas Daly area.