

DALY RIVER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING RECORD FOR

MEETING 9: 9 – 10 October 2008

Douglas Daly Research Farm

Present

Committee Member	Committee Role
John Childs	Chair
John Eddy	Represent Non-Indigenous landowners and the NT Horticultural 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
Chris Makepeace	Proxy for Warren de With representing Recreation/ Fishing interests and the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT
Gary Higgins – in attendance Thursday only	Represent Tourism and the Katherine Region Tourism Association
Stuart Blanch	Represent Conservation interests and the Environment Centre of the NT
Bruce Sawyer	Government Primary Industries
Ian Lancaster	Government Water Manager
Lorraine Corowa	Government Regional Development Planner
Darlene Lion	DRMAC Executive Officer
Apologies	
Stuart Gold	Government Conservation and Recreation Manager
Mark Meldrum	Government Land Use Planner
Warren de With	Represent Recreation/ Fishing interests and the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT

Other Attendance

Valemina White, DRARG, Malak Malak, as an observer.

Kelly Howitt, Water Allocation Planner, attended the meeting to advise on water management issue agenda items.

The Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage, the Hon. Alison Anderson MLA and Adviser, Mathew Fagan, attended the meeting for Agenda Item 4 to meet with DRMAC.

Presentations

Chris Berry, Glen Sansa and Kevin Mulvahal from Great Southern Limited attended the meeting for Agenda Item 7 to provide a presentation.

Don Reilly from the Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources attended the meeting for Agenda Item 7 to provide some background information on forestry in the Douglas Daly.

Liz Rysby from the Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge (TRaCK) program, Charles Darwin University, attended the meeting for Agenda Item 7 to provide a presentation.

Day 1: 9 October 2008

1. Welcome

1.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Stuart Gold, Mark Meldrum and Warren de With.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Chris Makepeace as proxy for Warren de With and Valemina White as an observer for the DRARG.

2. Previous Meeting

2.1 Meeting Record

The Meeting Record for Meeting 8 was accepted by DRMAC.

2.2 Action Sheet

Progress on the Action Sheet for Meeting 8 was noted.

John Childs advised that he met with the Executive Director of the NT Cattlemens Association (NTCA), Luke Bowen, regarding NTCA representation on DRMAC. NTCA is keen to be involved but want to hear from the Minister that there has been some progress in considering the moratorium.

John Childs, Ian Lancaster and Mona Liddy met with the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia, the Hon Gary Gray AO MP, at the Office of Northern Australia about sustainable development in the Daly region. It was noted that the Northern Australian

Land and Water Taskforce members have been announced. John Childs advised that he will monitor further developments.

3. Prepare for Meeting with the Minister

The Chair advised that the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage, the Hon Alison Anderson MLA, would attend the meeting from 11am to 12pm to meet with DRMAC.

John Childs advised that he met with the Minister prior to the DRMAC meeting. Much of their discussion was about land clearing. The Minister asked if DRMAC's previous advice to the Minister was still current, including the use of its clearing guidelines and the cascade assessment process (CAP). John advised the Minister that it was still DRMAC's position. There was some discussion about the way forward. John Childs asked about the process in following up the recent land clearing at Tipperary and talked about the importance of the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG).

DRMAC discussed the issues that they would talk to the Minister about, including:

- the role and future direction of DRMAC (apart from the role DRMAC has in water allocation planning). It was noted that there is little point in talking about land clearing if the NTG will leave the land clearing moratorium in place.
- the ARG role in relation to Indigenous water policy.
- progress on the living rivers program.
- the importance of meeting with the Minister.

4 Meet with Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage, the Hon Alison Anderson MLA

DRMAC met with the Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, the Hon Alison Anderson MLA, and her Senior Advisor, Mathew Fagan.

The Minister thanked DRMAC for the opportunity to meet and advised that she was keen to hear the views of the Committee.

DRMAC discussed a range of issues with the Minister including the importance of regional development and agriculture in the moratorium area, clearing outside the moratorium area, the application of the revised clearing guidelines and CAP to ensure sustainable development and the protection of water flows and quality throughout the Daly River Catchment, the application of a common regime throughout the NT and ensuring other options besides clearing are available for people to make money (such as covenants/ contracts).

The ARG members talked about the role of the ARG, and its involvement in water allocation planning and TRaCK research. They advised that the ARG would also like to be involved in the development of Indigenous water policy.

The Minister advised DRMAC of her intent to move forward as follows:

- I intend to drive the development and introduction of native vegetation management legislation that provides certainty and clarity to all landowners across the Territory while responsibly preserving our biodiversity.
- The Daly cannot be viewed in isolation from this process. It must move from a blanket moratorium to being part of a Territory-wide strict management system based on the best science.
- The previous decisions of DRMAC will inform this transition.
- I look forward to working closely with DRMAC on completing this transition as quickly as can be responsibly achieved.

There was considerable discussion and clarification of issues with the Minister and her Adviser.

DRMAC agreed to support the principles and intent proposed by the Minister and to work on progressing native vegetation management and land clearing policy and practice advice to the Minister.

The Minister advised that she would like to continue to work with DRMAC and attend further DRMAC meetings. The Minister advised that she would also be meeting with NTCA representatives to discuss her proposed approach for moving forward.

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

This agenda item was covered under Agenda Item 4, Meeting with the Minister.

6.2 Report of Land Clearing Applications and Approvals

DRMAC noted agenda item 6.2, a list of clearing applications and approvals in the Daly River Catchment.

6.3 Pastoral Land Development Applications

DRMAC noted the briefing provided for agenda item 6.3, regarding current development applications in the Daly River Catchment in respect to change of land tenure, land clearing and non-pastoral uses of land.

7. Presentation

Glen Sansa and Kevin Mulvahal from Great Southern Limited provided a presentation about Great Southern forestry and cattle operations in the NT and at the Douglas Daly property, What For.

Lyz Risby from the TRaCK program, Charles Darwin University, outlined plans for the development of a Water Quality Monitoring Framework for the Katherine and Daly River Catchments.

8. Water Management Issue

8.1 Draft Plan for the Tindall Limestone Aquifer (Katherine)

Kelly Howitt broadly outlined the issues raised through the public consultation process for the draft Water Allocation Plan for the Tindall Limestone Aquifer (Katherine) and the subsequent proposed revisions for the Plan and policy changes.

The expected process for progressing the Plan is:

- The Water Resources Report (which provides the science behind the Plan) will be finalised.
- The KWAC will meet in November to review the finalised Water Resources Report and the proposed changes to the Water Allocation Plan.
- DRMAC will review the Report and KWAC response at its meeting in December 2008.
- The Plan will be released for a 2nd round of consultation.
- During the first quarter of 2009, the Plan will be approved and released.

8.2 Issuing of Water Extraction Licences for Lower Daly

Mona Liddy advised that the ARG is waiting for legal advice from NLC on this issue. The matter is on the ARG meeting agenda scheduled for Monday 14 October.

8.3 Water Allocation Planning Ooloo Aquifer

Ian Lancaster requested comment from DRMAC on an application by the Peanut Company of Australia (PCA) for 3 new production bores to extract water from the Ooloo Aquifer and an increase in their licence from 3 to 9 gigalitres. Some concerns were raised in relation to equity issues for other potential users and allocation of water prior to the completion of a water allocation plan for the Ooloo Aquifer. Ian advised DRMAC that all applications will be presented to the Committee prior to decisions on them and that a localised hydrogeological report due in November 2008 would help inform decisions regarding the requested increased licence.

DRMAC reviewed and provided comments on the Communication Strategy for the Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan and the Proposed Outcomes and Objectives for the Plan.

DRMAC agreed to the proposed Communication Strategy and proposed Outcomes and Objectives for the Plan, and will monitor the planning process to assess progress and consider any changes needed.

DRMAC noted briefings on the Ooloo Aquifer Monitoring Bores and the Daly River Integrated Model.

Kelly Howitt advised that the proposed water control district for the water allocation plan will comprise of the Daly River Catchment and the Roper River Catchment and will be called the Daly Roper Water Control District.

DRMAC agreed to the proposed formation of the Daly Roper Water Control District.

Kelly advised that NRETAS Water Management is currently contacting existing and potential licence applicants for the next 10 years to determine their development plans and potential requirements for water.

DRMAC discussed the frequency of DRMAC meetings and the time needed for water allocation planning work.

DRMAC agreed that it would in future schedule an extra half to whole day meeting in between DRMAC meetings as necessary to progress water allocation planning.

9. Reports/ Information Papers

9.1 Draft Conservation Plan for the Daly

As noted on the agenda, an update will be provided at the December 2008 meeting.

9.2 Local Government Arrangements

DRMAC noted agenda item 9.2, a briefing on local government arrangements. It was noted that there could be pressures from local governments in the future for water or other natural resources as pressures are placed on them to develop their regions.

9.3 Engagement guidelines for Water Allocation Planning

Mona Liddy will work with the ARG to develop engagement guidelines to be used when working with Indigenous people in water allocation planning.

DRMAC will consider the Guidelines and how to use them when they are presented at a meeting in the near future.

9.4 Development of a Component Tree System

DRMAC agreed to the recommendations of agenda item 9.4, a briefing on the outcomes of the Northern Australian Irrigation Futures – DRMAC workshop.

Action

The DRMAC Executive Officer will organise a one day workshop to complete the development of the social branch of the Ecologically Sustainable Development Component Tree for the Daly River Catchment and to commence development of the other outstanding branches.

9.5 Forestry in the Douglas Daly

DRMAC noted agenda item 9.5, background information on plantation forestry in the NT. It was noted that research is needed on plantation forestry water interception and use. The research proposal on water interception and use, provided as part of the background information, is to be developed for use in a funding proposal to be put together by Lindsay Hutley of TRaCK.

Action

DRMAC will write to the Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources to provide support for research on plantation forestry water interception and use.

9.6 Draft proposal for irrigation research in the Daly

An update on related research proposals will be provided at the December 2008 meeting.

9.7 Natural Resource Management Legislation

As noted on the agenda, an update will be provided at the December 2008 meeting.

9.8 Economic, Social and Cultural Values of the Daly

An update on the related research studies will be provided at the DRMAC Research Update Forum to be held at the DRMAC December 2008 meeting.

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

DRMAC noted agenda item 9.9, the Daly River Landscape Design Project September 2008 Update. It was noted that as the study will be conducted on properties that already have clearing permits, it will have limited scientific value.

DRMAC agreed to inform Tony Griffiths of its concern that the value of the research in informing future clearing guidelines had been reduced.

9.10 Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group Update

Mona Liddy advised that the next ARG meeting would be held on 14 November 2008. Kelly Howitt would attend the meeting to provide an update on water allocation planning and representatives of TRaCK would provide research projects updates. The ARG will consider development of Indigenous Engagement Guidelines. It was noted that Great Southern Limited also expressed interest in Indigenous Engagement Protocols.

The ARG is developing a web page and have received some funding through NAILSMA.

9.11 TRaCK Scenario Modelling Update

DRMAC noted agenda item 9.11, an update on the modelling scenarios forwarded by the CDU Director School for Environmental Research, Professor Stephen Garnett. DRMAC will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the scenarios at the DRMAC Research Forum Update.

9.12 Update on the Sediment River Network Modelling (SedNet)

DRMAC noted agenda item 9.12, A Preliminary Assessment of Hillslope (Sheet and Rill) Erosion and Suspended Sediment Movement in the Daly River Catchment.

10. Communication

10.1 Community Engagement

The Executive Officer advised that the next DRMAC newsletter was under development.

A constructive and valuable social event was held with the Douglas Daly Development Association on 9 October 2008. A formal presentation of DRMAC activities was followed by discussion of issues, principally land, vegetation and regrowth clearing. Informal discussion with DRMAC members gave insights into community views.

10.2 Membership

Representation of the NTCA was discussed under Agenda Item 2.2.

10.3 New Business

No additional new business was noted.

13. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held early December 2008 in Darwin. The DRMAC Research Forum Update will be held as part of the meeting.