

Katherine Water Advisory Committee
Executive Summary
11 February 2008 6.00pm
Katherine Town Council Gallery

Members Present

Rohan Sullivan (Chair)

Anne Shepherd

Mick Peirce

John Etty

David George

Peter Sinnott

David Higgins

Warren De With

Jodie Locke

Member Role

Pastoral

NT Cattleman's Association

Chair

Katherine Community

Local Irrigator

Environment

ECNT/ DRMAC Member

Public Water Supply

Power Water Corporation

NT Horticultural Association

Commerce/ Industry

Chamber of Commerce

Agriculture

NT Horticultural Association

Recreation

Amateur Fishing Association NT/ DRMAC Member

Local Government

Katherine Town Council

Members Absent

Bill Harney

Gary Want

Mick Jerram

Preston Lee

Indigenous Interests

Wardaman Corporation

Defence

RAAF Tindal

Tourism

Katherine Regional Tourism Association

Indigenous Interests

Jawoyn Association

Advisors Present

Ian Lancaster

Daniel Connor

Malcolm Bennett

Controller of Water Resources

NRETA

Advisor

NT Govt. Water Resource Planner

Advisor

NT Govt. Regional Agronomist

Guests

Lachlan Kelsall

Tash Rammers

Water Advisory Officer

NRETA

PowerWater Corporation

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1. Welcome

Meeting opened 6.10pm.

Apologies

Gary Want	Defence
	RAAF Tindal
Mick Jerram	Tourism
	Katherine Regional Tourism Association
Preston Lee	Indigenous Interests
	Jawoyn Association

2. Previous Meeting

a. Meeting record

Previous Meeting Record accepted by Committee.

b. Action Items and progress

3. Business Arising from previous meeting

4. Water Act Bill

Water Act has been reviewed as a Government commitment to meet National Water Initiative requirements.

Points of Interest

- Stage One completed – changes enable Act to be more transparent
 - All Water Extraction applications must be advertised – this does not apply to current applications for Tindall, these will be advertised as a bulk lot.
 - Advertising will be placed at applicants cost in appropriate news publications
 - Comments will be asked for and decision will be made within 30 days
 - Decision will be advertised at Departmental cost
 - Provision for appeals will be reinforced
- Register of all licences will be placed on the internet with limited information i.e. licensed amount, limited contact details, exemption can be applied for in special circumstances – current register is available only in writing in the Water Management Branch in Darwin
- Stage Two is expected to be completed into 2009

- The new Commonwealth Act requires that water extraction information will be submitted to BOM for reporting on an annual basis.

5. Formation of Technical Expert Group

Technical Expert Group for peer support on technical aspects of the Water Allocation Plan, Hydrogeologist, Controller of Water Resources, Hydrologist and an Aquatic Ecologist comprise the group.

Point of Interest

It has been advised that the definition of Sustainable Yield is not consistent in Water Allocation Plans – advice is to rename this as Extraction Limit.

6. Beneficial Use Declarations

- With revision of the KWCD boundaries beneficial use categories for Groundwater will be revised to add Ecosystem Protection.
- Beneficial use serve two purposes under the Water Act the first is to provide a mechanism for the assigning of water in a WAP and the second is for setting water quality objectives i.e. level suitable for Public Water Supply as set out in ANZECC, 2000 guidelines

7. Indigenous Water Study

Report is completed and awaiting approval by Wardaman Association, it will be available for Committee discussion for the next meeting.

Points of Interest

Recommendations from the CSIRO study will be considered by the Katherine Water Advisory Committee for inclusion in the Water Allocation Plan.

Consultation report will be compiled justifying decisions made by the Committee in respect to submissions received. This report will be submitted with the KWAP as a reference document.

NAILSMA held an Indigenous Water Policy Strategic Workshop in February – the outcomes of this group will feed into future WAP's i.e. Plan's for the Ooloo and Mataranka Tindall areas.

8. Update on Licence Review and Assessment

DPIFM and Water Management Branch will review the draft report when received (expected 27th Feb) with the finalised report to be received soon after.

9. Review of Stakeholder Engagement Action Plans

A generic presentation, information posters, flyers and submission forms will be made available for the Committee representatives to present to Stakeholder Groups to assist in consultations during the submission period on the Draft WAP.

The Chair requested each member to update the committee on what consultation has happened to date, requirements during the consultation phase of the Water Allocation Plan

Warren De With

- All reports and minutes are forwarded to the Executive Committee
- Members with interest contact representative directly through Executive Committee for further information
- NRETA presentation and facilitation at meetings would be advantageous on release of Water Allocation Plan

Peter Sinnott

- All reports and minutes are forwarded to the Executive Committee
- Members with specific interest are encouraged to contact KWAC
- To date general discussions and updates have been provided at scheduled meetings

John Etty

- Waiting on report on modelling prior to holding more formal discussions with stakeholder groups

Mick Peirce

- Misinformation has been addressed through open public meetings
- Public meeting on release of plan for comment will provide interested parties with the opportunity to ask questions

David Higgins

- All reports and minutes are forwarded to the Executive Committees
- Updates on process of Water Allocation Plan is given at scheduled meetings
- Only concerns are with the integrity of the model with many previous versions – independent peer review report would be sought by Stakeholder group – *this review has been completed and NRETA is awaiting reports for dissemination*

Malcolm Bennett

- Generic presentation on release of the Water Allocation Plan could be held through Public Seminar Series
- Concerns regarding the accuracy of the model have been raised

David George

- All reports and minutes are forwarded to the General Manager, Natural Systems
- Internal discussions regarding the implications of Water Allocation Plans are ongoing

Rohan Sullivan

- All reports and minutes are forwarded to the Executive Committee
- Generic presentation to Executive Committee and Katherine members will be arranged through Executive Committee
- Feedback received to date indicates that the Water Allocation Plan should include a greater area than the Tindall Limestone Aquifer

10. Draft Water Allocation Plan – Tindall Limestone Aquifer

Recalculation of average recharge and revision from 96 000 mL/y to 74 000 mL/y on comparison of 40 year average recharge to 40 year average discharge (previously 10 year average recharge to 40 year average discharge).

Part One - Introduction

- Date of declaration is the date of commencement of the Water Allocation Plan
- New plan is declared at end of the ten year period. The Katherine Water Advisory Committee will review the plan at the five year mark and prior to the declaration of new Water Allocation Plan.

Part Two – Visions, Strategies and Performance Indicators

- Outlines how objectives will be achieved and how the Plan will be assessed.

Part Three – Basis for Water Allocation Planning

- Acknowledgement of climatic and recharge variability
- Acknowledgement that allocations will change on an annual basis according to water availability
- Proposed water extraction regimes for the following water accounting year for licences located in WMZ1 and 2 based on property development plans
- Actual water extraction regime for the previous water accounting year reported for licences located in WMZ3

Part Four – Rules for Grant of Licence to Take Groundwater

- New requirements for advertising and licence register, including increased accountability of decisions by the Controller of Water Resources.
- A Ground Water Extraction Licence in the NT incorporates and entitlement as well as mandatory and specific conditions relating to the use of the licence and obligations of the licensee.
- The possible inclusion of a clause that public awareness campaigns will be run if entitlements are heavily reduced to share the reduction across all water users including Rural Stock and Domestic.

Part Five – Extraction Limit

- Previously referred to as Sustainable Yield
- Inclusion of Katherine River extractors reliant on discharge from the Tindall Limestone Aquifer is necessary to ensure correct calculations
- The methodology used is to equate the average discharge to a % of average recharge

Part Six – Assignment of Risk

- Risk Assignment is a requirement under the National Water Initiative – including the reduction in entitlement or annual allocation as a result of ;
 - Climatic variability
 - Natural Events
 - Improvements in knowledge of water systems
 - Capacity to sustain extraction levels

Part Seven – Water Assigned to Beneficial Uses

- Water contained within this water source is split into two categories and displayed as;
 - Consumptive use,
 - maximum volume assigned from security level pool;
 - Maximum percentage assigned from a security level pool
 - Environment for other public benefit outcomes,
 - volume with respect to the average recharge to this water source
 - percentage with respect to the average recharge to this water source

Part Eight – Rules for Managing Licences to Take Groundwater

- Water accounting year to be announced and commence at the least obstructive time for agriculture, while being achievable in terms of running the model at the completion of the Wet Season. The current date specified in the Plan is May 1, although should there be a need for restrictions in any given year indicative implications will be made public prior to this date.
- Suggested wording change to “allocation announcements to be made no later than May 1”. Refer to point above.
- Licence Reviews will be instigated if Property Development Plan varies by more than one year – licence amount may be altered accordingly.
- Water Management Zones are expected to regulate Water Trading and impact on water resources they will allow variability in licence conditions. Zones 1 and 2 will have more stringent monthly extraction limits than Zone 3 users.

Part Nine – Bore Construction Permits

- Bore construction will not be permitted where there is a reticulated water supply
- Bore construction will not be permitted unless a licence is available or use is Stock & domestic
- Formalises conditions on existing Bore Construction Permits

Part Ten – Groundwater Extraction Licences

- Formalising conditions applying to Groundwater Extraction Licences

Part Eleven – Monitoring and Evaluation

- Schedule of Performance Indicators – Monitoring Plan
- Review to be completed at intervals of not longer than 5 years.

Part Twelve – Amendments of this Plan

- Allows amendments to the Plan to be made according to specific clauses.

11. Next meeting 25 February 2008

Meeting Closed 9.20pm