

WILSON INLET MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 21 JUNE 2006 AT THE SHIRE OF DENMARK RECEPTION ROOM AT 1.00PM

PRESENT: George Ebbett, Brad Kneebone, John Xanthis, Geoff Findlay, Diane Harwood, Zak Launay, Pascoe Durtanovich, Dave Rushton, Danny Burkett, Helen Heydenrych, Phil Shephard

IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Gunby, Neville Boughton

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1.10pm

1. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Case Koning

Mr Koning had a series of questions regarding community representation on WIMAG (these were tabled at the WIMAG meeting in April). George Ebbett systematically addressed these questions, providing a brief overview of member profiles and also clarified that community members do not necessarily represent the organisation they might be from and that there are not many group representatives in WIMAG in any case.

Owen McIntosh

Mr McIntosh gave his perspective in relation to water quality in Wilson Inlet in support of Jerry Jenke's proposal for an eastern opening trial, discussed at the previous WIMAG meeting. The following points were the focus of his argument:

- Extensive knowledge of the inlet from 50 years fishing and involvement in research during the 1980's
- Salinity monitoring comprising numerous readings at 3 top basin sites and 3 lower basin sites to calculate average (supporting Rod Lenanton's studies of the inlet)
- Monitoring of water levels at Crusoe jetty
- Concern that current salinity levels are not conducive to cobbler spawning resulting in a shortage of small fish and that cobbler stocks have diminished in recent years due to fresher conditions.

Owen was reminded that WIMAG does not have any authority regarding the location of the bar opening and is simply obliged to support the majority community sentiment in relation to this matter.

Gerard Hughes

Mr Hughes requested from Danny Burkett an update of the Water Corporation's Sewer Infill Program. Danny explained that the program is a statewide initiative and that he does not know any specific details pertaining to the Denmark area. Danny also stated that there is likely to be some advances in this regard as a result of increasing development pressure

2. **APOLOGIES** Colleen Donnelly, John Jamieson, Basil Schur, Jason Froud

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th April 2006 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES AND CORRESPONDENCE

- 4.1 WIMAG article and photo, 'Inlet group given revamp', in Denmark Bulletin 4th May 2006.
- 4.2 Helen Heydenrych was appointed to the community member position vacated by Sandra Shakespeare.
- 4.3 Correspondence to the Shire of Denmark in response to referral of submission titled 'Poor state of Wilson Inlet'. As recommended at the previous meeting an updated version of the Sandbar Opening Protocol document will be tabled later in the meeting for discussion.
- 4.4 Correspondence from the Shire of Denmark advising that any appropriate WIMAG items can be included in the Council newsletter.
- 4.5 Correspondence from the Shire of Denmark inviting WIMAG participation in the development of a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan aimed at ensuring people with disabilities can access all facilities within the Shire. Public forums regarding this matter are scheduled for 26th June, 29th June and 6th July.

- 4.6 Correspondence to the Shire of Denmark and the City of Albany requesting that they refer to CALM a proposal to upgrade the vesting of UCL at the eastern inlet foreshore to a reserve with a purpose reflecting the areas conservation value. Need to provide a copy of the letter to the City of Albany to Jude Allen at CALM. Jude is involved with the review of coastal reserves.
- 4.7 Reserve 23579 (mouth of Hay River) proposed remedial work – reminder. Also, proposal to remove 'Camping' from the reserve's purpose south of the bridge and to shift boat launching to just north of the bridge.
- 4.8 Proposed Department of Fisheries research looking at seagrass (*Ruppia*) and cobbler stocks in Wilson Inlet – recent developments. DoE/DoW hope to find funding to contribute to study but for now support in principle and are committed to providing water quality data.
- 4.9 Correspondence received from Wilson Inlet Environment Group (WISE) requesting that WIMAG advise the Department of Environment that a five-year trial of eastern openings would be beneficial to the health of Wilson Inlet and understanding of estuarine processes generally. To be addressed at item 7.

5. WIMAG MINUTES

Discussion focused on member's preference in regard to the detail and format of minutes. Currently, Dave Rushton records the minutes at meetings however it is proposed that Pascoe assigns this task to an appropriate Shire employee for future meetings to enable Dave to better participate in proceedings. Several members expressed their preference for detailed minutes, stating it is important for the general community to have access to as much information regarding the meetings proceedings as possible. Other members agreed it is adequate to simply document the main points and any outcomes, recommendations or actions that may result from group discussions.

It was resolved that Dave will continue to record minutes albeit in a less comprehensive form. Pascoe advised that the Shire might consider utilising Shire personnel for minute taking if the group was agreeable to minutes being presented in a similar format to Council minutes.

6. SAND BAR SURVEY – 2003 TO 2006

Neville Boughton conducted a power point presentation detailing his investigation into the extent of sand deposition behind the sand bar at the mouth of Wilson Inlet after bar closure in each of the years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. One survey was made each year, except 2003 when surveys were made both before and after a major bar overtopping event.

Contour maps were prepared for each survey and comparison of the maps showed significant changes in the sand deposition pattern from year to year. The surveys in 2003 provided sufficient data to enable the calculation of the volume of sand swept into the inlet during a bar overtopping event. This volume was approximately 30 000 m³, which is about one-third of the volume of sand that filled the bar channel during the process of bar closure in both 1997-98 and 1998-99. The maps were accompanied by a report from which the following information is taken.

Sand Deposition Processes

As is the case with natural phenomena, the situation at any given time is the result of a number of different processes working simultaneously. The sand deposition behind the bar is no exception but it seems that there are two separate processes which together account for most of the sand deposition behind the bar. These are:

- Entrainment of sand by tidal currents and the wash from breaking waves during tidal inflow and deposition of that sand in calmer water adjacent to the bar channel.
- Erosion of sand from the bar during bar overtopping events, the deposition of that sand in the inlet behind the bar.

Both of these processes are produced by conditions in the ocean and conditions in the inlet have only a minor effect on the resultant sand deposition.

The process of tidal currents and wash from waves breaking on Ocean Beach operates almost every day the bar is open. It is a consequence of water current with sufficiently high velocity picking up sand from the bed and transporting it in the direction of the current. When the velocity of the current falls below a critical level the transported sand is dropped to the bed at that location. The incoming tidal flow is usually strong enough to pick up sand and carry it into the inlet. Similarly, the outgoing tidal flow can usually carry sand out of the inlet. If these were the only factors at work the net transport of sand would be close to zero however, two further factors come into play. Firstly, the result of breaking waves increases the sand inflow. Secondly, the result of high river inflows to the inlet causes sand inside the bar to be eroded and carried out through the bar channel.

When waves break the resultant surge of water causes a wash towards the shore. Even with fairly small waves this wash, which is technically called a “swash”, can penetrate right through the bar channel into the inlet. The effect of the swash is to increase the velocity of the tidal inflow and reduce the velocity of the tidal outflow. Hence the swash increases sand inflow and decreases sand outflow. A series of bar channel surveys over the bar-open periods in 1997-98 and 1998-99 showed a progressive shallowing of the bar channel consistent with the effects of the swash.

However, this steady inflow of sand into the inlet is sometimes nullified and even reversed when there is high river inflow to the inlet. With no river inflow, the tidal outflow balances the tidal inflow, but with high river inflows the tidal outflow is markedly higher and this increases its ability to scour sand from inside the inlet and carry it out through the bar.

Consequently, the extent to which sand is carried from the ocean into the bar channel and then to the inlet depends on which wins the battle, the inlet or the ocean. During each time of high river inflow in winter and early spring, the inlet wins. At other times in those seasons, the ocean wins. When river inflow decreases in late spring and summer the ocean is dominant and the build up of sand continues until the bar is closed.

Bar Overtopping Events

In some years, bar overtopping events are so severe or frequent that they cause considerable deposition of sand behind the bar in addition to that caused by the effect of tidal currents and swash.

A copy of the report is available from Dave Rushton if members require additional information.

7. WILSON INLET BAR OPENING PROTOCOL

Chris Gunby made some minor amendments to the Wilson Inlet Sandbar Opening Protocol document for the purposes of updating it. The Shire **and not WIMAG** continues to be the best organisation to represent the community in relation to opening location in accordance with the western opening policy with plans to review this position in 2008 when the Wilson Inlet Nutrient Reduction Action Plan will also be reviewed.

Referring to claims by Mr Jenke and Mr McIntosh that an eastern opening will improve cobbler recruitment, spawning, etc, Helen asked if there is any supporting scientific data. The proposed cobbler/ruppia study for the inlet will hopefully fill some of the knowledge gaps in this area.

Pascoe stated that it is not appropriate for him to propose a motion to Council requesting an immediate review of the western opening policy but that any elected Council member can do so.

A copy of the updated document was provided to WIMAG members for future reference. Members were also asked to provide feedback in the coming weeks.

8. DENMARK WASTE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY

Danny Burkett explained that the Water Corporation is currently undertaking strategic wastewater planning for Denmark. The review is driven by the expected increase in urban growth in the area.

The review is in the preliminary stages but it is expected that some conceptual options for wastewater management in Denmark will be developed in the coming months. At an appropriate time the Water Corporation will present these options for discussion and feedback from all relevant stakeholders, including Wilson Inlet Management Action Group.

9. WILSON INLET NUTRIENT REDUCTION ACTION PLAN

Dave Rushton tabled a WINRAP implementation progress/update report primarily focusing on land care initiatives throughout the Wilson Inlet catchment area during April, May and June 2006.

10. MEMBERS REPORTS

Phil Shephard – Nil

Geoff Findlay – Recreational Boating Scheme, works scheduled to improve Poddysht launching facility. Ocean Beach Surf Lifesaving Club, use of jet skis for training purposes exempt from DPI licensing. Assume responsible and considerate use will minimise potential impacts, particularly to inlet bird life. Training days scheduled for 28th-30th July & 11th-13th August. Notification will appear in the Denmark Bulletin.

Diane Harwood – Concerned that paperbarks at the edge of car park at the Poddysht boat ramp are susceptible to damage. Requests that the Shire ensure adequate protection.

Chris Gunby – can provide breakdown of SCRIPT projects at the next meeting, eg. heritage of estuaries along the South Coast, review of foreshore management plans (priorities to consolidate and update existing documents).

Brad Kneebone – Morley Beach may require its own management plan.

John Xanthis – Recreational fishing dropped off after bar closure this year. Notification of new group comprising of 330 members born out of the windfarm debate called 'Landscape Guardians'.

Danny Burkett – Nil.

Zak Launay – Oyster established 4 weeks ago and appear to be doing well. Question raised regarding impact on oysters under conditions of higher salinity.

Helen Heydenrych – update fisheries research for south coast estuaries, including Wilson Inlet (summer and autumn sampling complete).

Pascoe Durtanovich – Denmark River and Inlet Boating Strategy, update:

DPI - \$5,000

Denmark Shire - \$5,000

SCRIPT - \$10,000

Total of \$20,000 available for the project but no tenders were submitted. The Shire is currently reviewing options.

Rivermouth development – reclamation component requires approx 1000m³ – appropriate fill material to be possibly sourced from Ocean Beach.

Funding sought for steps and disabled access to Ocean Beach Surf Club. The Club has been asked to submit a concept plan.

Dave Rushton – Recommended that member profiles be included on the WINRAP/WIMAG website. This can be arranged in the coming months if members agree.

11. NEXT MEETING – 16th August 2006