

WILSON INLET MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 17 FEBRUARY 2010 AT SHIRE OF DENMARK, RECEPTION ROOM AT 1.00PM

PRESENT: George Ebbett (Chairperson), Mark Parre, John Xanthis, Warren Miller, Tony Fitzpatrick (DoT), Danial Pell (DoT), Andrew Maughan (DoW), Maria Sain (WC), Jennie Carey (DEC), Elissa Stewart (WICC), Mieke Bourne (DoW – minutes).

1. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Case Koning – Acknowledges Dan Endacott's good work and hopes that this will continue now that Mieke is in the role. From the community forum the general feeling was that people are not happy with the condition of the inlet. Chris Gunby's presentation on the sand bar history stated that the Department of Water would comply with what the general public's wants with respect to an East or West bar opening. The question is how you (WIMAG) are going to ensure the general public are well informed about the issue to be able to make a decision and how will the public views be determined?
George – The group can't do that. It is difficult to judge the opinion of the wider community. There is a general belief that there is no great advantage in changing the location of bar openings so the decision will be made on amenity and by Council. WIMAG could make a recommendation to Council.

Gregg Harwood – There is presently a red tide algal bloom at Ocean Beach and if it does not clear the beach may be closed. A sample of the algae was brought in to show the group. The sample was brown in the jar but was red when first put in.

Jennie – it is a very common algae species that occurs all along the coast and is not caused by nutrients enrichment. New findings suggest you should not swim in it.

Mark – algae on the east of the inlet, near Youngs Lake, is different and should be looked at. Andrew said we will discuss that as part of agenda item 4.

Case – lots of algae at Prawn Rock channel and signs up there and at the Yacht Club.

Andrew – will also be discussed in agenda item 4.

George asked if the group had objections to the visitors present: Case Koning, Dawn Pedro, John Taylor and Owen McIntosh staying for the remainder of the meeting. There were no objections from members.

2. APOLOGIES

Yvette Caruso, Gerard Healy, Phil Shaw, John Dibble, Kirsty Alexander.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Confirmation of minutes from the meeting 21 October 2009 were confirmed as true and correct.

Moved – John Xanthis

Seconded – Elissa Stewart

Carried.

4. CORRESPONDENCE & MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Actions from last meeting:

4.1.1 - Letter to Albany Bird Group in response to their concerns Re: horse riding tours on Morley Beach

Mieke read out parts of the letter which was sent to the Albany Bird Group on 11 November 2009 which stated that in the October meeting WIMAG reached a consensus that it should not support the proposal for horse riding tours on Morley Beach.

4.1.2 - Letter to South Coast Licensed Fisherman's Association Re: safety issues at mussel lease

Mieke read out the letter sent to the South Coast Licensed Fisherman's Association on 11 November 2009 which advised that:

- Their concern was discussed during the October meeting.
- The Department of Fisheries advised that they had conducted a recent inspection of the lease area and that some issues with lighting were detected and the lessee is addressing this.
- The DoF also advised that no issues with containment of equipment were detected at the inspection.

4.2 Correspondence In:

4.2.1 Resignation from community member Ian Osborne.

4.3 Matters arising:

Membership expiries and new members.

George – community members were interviewed today. More information will become available once the selection process has been finalised.

Welcome Mieke

Mieke - previously worked on preparing estuary management plans for Culham and Stokes Inlets and is from Denmark. Will work in the role for two months while a more permanent replacement is found.

4. RECENT ALGAL BLOOMS AND ASSOCIATED WARNINGS FOR WILSON INLET (DoW – Andrew)

- DoW has ongoing water quality monitoring of the inlet but this does not include the shallows. DoW responds to algae blooms.
- DoW was notified of a dog illness incident on 4/1/2010 after the dog had been in contact with sediment and DoW responded that day with initial sampling at Robertson's jetty.
- 3 algal species identified with potential to cause toxins which may affect human and animal health.
- The three cyanobacterial species were Phormidium, Oscillatoria, and Tychonema.
- DoW followed up 12/1/2010 with broader sampling at 15 sites aiming for general coverage of the inlet but focusing on places known to be accessed by the public.
- Nine of those sites positive to the same three algal species at varying levels.
- Signs placed at public access areas after DoH advice and liaison with LGAs.
- DoW hasn't detected the species before as we generally sample deeper water rather than targeting these shallow sites – so we have no background/historical data on intensity and duration.
- We think it probably occurs regularly in Wilson Inlet and other estuaries when conditions are suitable.
- We will continue with monthly sampling until winter/end of algal bloom season/levels decline.
- It is possible to add further sites to the monthly sampling in response to Mark Parre's concerns around Youngs Lake.
- The Vet advised the dog have other health problems which more likely caused death rather than the algae contact.

The DoW needs to think further about its response in future because the algae may be a regular occurrence and it may not be appropriate for us to always respond in this way. We don't necessarily have the resources and it may encourage an attitude in the community that if there are no signs then it is not important to be cautious (we don't and can't sample everywhere and the LGAs may choose not to erect signs).

Action – DoW to determine what it will do in the future with respect to sediment algae sampling (Mieke and Kirsty)

General discussion that the community did not have realistic expectations of the inlet and what is normal. Suggested that it would be good to have an information brochure for the community providing more information about algae found in the inlet. Question as to whether the DoW provided a response to the issue in the Bulletin.

Action – DoW to determine the best way to publicise algae information (Mieke and Kirsty)

Mark - with recent changes in the hydrology of river that passes Zimmermann Street, a number of people have been mentioning that it is greener recently and this site could be added to the DoW sampling.

Action – Water Corporation to advise the group at the next meeting of the situation with respect to discharges to the river that crosses Zimmermann Street (Maria)

5. SHIRE OF DENMARK RESERVES INFORMATION EVENING

Mieke read out the following report from the Shire of Denmark on the recent information evening held by Shire of Denmark.

Clearing Wilson Inlet Foreshore Reserve

- On the 4th of November 2009 the Shire of Denmark became aware of illegal clearing which occurred on foreshore reserve in front of a private property near Poddyshot Place. Subsequently an investigation took place and the Shire fined the property owner under *Shire of Denmark Property Local Law Section 4.2 (1) and (2)*. "It is as an offence to remove or damage vegetation on local government property..." and *8.4 of the Shire of Denmark Property Local Law* "Notice to the offender to reinstate the property to the condition prior to the offence". An Infringement Notice for the sum of \$100 plus an invoice for the sum of \$1700 (seedling cost for revegetation) and an agreement was reached with landholders to participate in the revegetation works in late 2010 (once water levels have dropped).
- The Shire also contacted Walpole branch of DEC and after a site visit with Ranger Clive Burden it was noted that DEC would proceed with an Incident Complaint Form. However due to the clearing being a minor incident in the scale of DEC incidence it was not likely to receive any further attention.

"Loving Local Reserves"

The Shire held an education forum regarding environmental values of the foreshore reserve in response to the illegal clearing on the 9th of December. An invitation letter was sent to all landholders whose properties bordered the Foreshore reserve and media releases and flyers were distributed (see attached pdf). There were 28 attendees, including 20 from general public, 5 from Denmark Weed Action group, and 3 councilors. Shire staff who attended included NRM officers Helen Heydenrych, Melinda Lyons, Mark Parre (Shire Nursery Manager) and Graeme Hockley (Community Fire Manager).

Speakers included Karlene Bain from Dept of Env and Conservation, Diane Harwood from Denmark Weed Action Group, plus Helen, Melinda, Mark. (Flyer attached)

Public comment included

- The wish to preserve existing access tracks to water from properties (Shire agreed to an allowable width of 1m for existing tracks but that no tree removal would be permitted)
- Fire break maintenance that is conducted by Shire be approached with sensitivity to weed, aesthetics and dieback
- It was suggested that the Shire distribute educational flyer to landholders, new residents and holiday makers re: the values of foreshore reserve (Pamphlet being drafted by DWAG from grant funds received)
- Continue to hold education forums
- Promote development of Friends of Reserves to assist in monitoring and maintenance of reserves.

Mark is suggesting the establishment of GPS photo monitoring points along the foreshore. The purpose of this would be to provide evidence if changes / clearing takes place in the future.

Jennie asked if there was an easier way to monitor this such as aerial photography. Mark suggested the aerals would not pick up the smaller trees and the photo monitoring would focus on parts of the foreshore in front of residential areas as a priority. The group was asked if they support this proposal and there were no objections.

Action – write a letter to the Shire of Denmark, attention Yvette Caruso, in support of establishing a photo point monitoring project along the foreshore of Wilson Inlet (Mieke)

6. **UPDATE ON PROGRESS WITH REMOVING DEAD MATERIAL FROM PODDY SHOT**

Mieke updated the group on the proposed removal of dead *Ruppia* and other plant material accumulated at Poddy Shot to prevent odour and amenity problems over summer & autumn. The group is aware of the agreement between the DoW and SoD for the ongoing management of Poddy Shot. The Shire has been provided with \$5000 to aid with the removal of *Ruppia*.

Presently the conditions at Poddy Shot have been reported as being alright. The current arrangement is for Mieke and Helen from SoD to visit the site in late May to determine the need for removal before Easter. If removal is necessary than a work order will be submitted.

Mark and John both agreed that the conditions at Poddy Shot were better than some previous years and the members had no objections to the current arrangements for the site.

7. **MIDDLE GUTTER DREDGING PROPOSAL (John Xanthis)**

John put up a picture on the whiteboard demonstrating the proposal for pinch point dredging of the middle gutter area of the delta area where the channel marker is to approximately 300-400m behind the sand bar which is approximately where the storm surges push sand up to, to increase marine exchange when the sandbar is open. Why do this? With the Hay River not delivering the same amount of water to the inlet and without high water level in the inlet, it is not getting a good flush or marine exchange. Minor dredging can increase water exchange. Everyone wants something to be done.

Read out a media article from Augusta about their ideas for moving the mouth of the Blackwood River.

Warren - there has been high rainfall over past 2 years and has not flushed the sand out, western opening has not worked. Need to think about acid sulphate soils for dredging.

Wants to see a 5 year trial of an eastern opening.

John – trying to move away from the E/W debate. Wants to see more marine exchange.

Andrew – DoW would not take a lead on the proposal or fund it but would need to be involved in any group looking at this to provide advice. Would need to be referred to the EPA for them to set the level of assessment and any final approval would be via DoW under the *Waterways Conservation Act*.

Group discussed that this issue needs to be Shire driven and involve Shire Councillors.

Could ask SoD to form a working group to look into this issue.

George – suggests matter is deferred until next meeting when there will be greater community representation. No objections to this proposal.

8. **POTENTIAL REVIEW OF WIMAG**

George – a review of WIMAG has not occurred for a long time. Given the tardy response in applications for community membership suggests may be a good time to carry out this review. Asked community members to provide a comment on if WIMAG has fulfilled its role over the past 5-6 years and where they think it is heading.

John – should be more communication from DoW.

George - there is lots of information available but difficult to get community to take the information on, do you have any suggestions?

John – would be good to have something in the paper about stuff discussed in WIMAG.

George – Could add to notes from Shire in the Bulletin.

Support for this idea from the group.

Action – Shire NRM officer to add information from each WIMAG meeting to the Shires note in the Denmark Bulletin (Yvette)

Warren – cancellation of last meeting is against the constitution. Was the last meeting for some members, robbed them of their last meeting. Basil had an agenda item.

Mieke – Yvette and Mieke will organise drinks or something after the next meeting to say thank you to previous members and welcome new members.

George – suggests further discussion on this issue when more community members are on board at next meeting and when Kirsty is present. Discussion should include terms of reference.

Andrew – WINRAP will be reviewed and this might help determine whether any changes to how WIMAG operates can help with WINRAP implementation.

George – would like to see interest in broader inlet.

Mark – progress association of his area passes on concerns or items for Mark to bring to WIMAG.

9. **MEMBERS REPORTS**

Mark – everything already mentioned.

John – Prawn Rock channel pontoon bridge has been put back and extended. Good year in the channel with lots of blue water in the afternoons while the bar was open.

Boardwalk and walk trail, last part planned to provide last link for public safety, tied up with *Aboriginal Heritage Act* at present.

ABC Australian Story program on water quality issues in Tasmania on that week, very interesting and part 2 on next Monday.

Warren - nothing to add.

Tony – introduced new transport officer, Dan. Basil had reported tree fallen into Denmark River was a navigation hazard and DoT was organising for its removal as a hazard but will leave logs in water.

Maria – none.

Jennie – Has been arrangement for UCL (Unallocated Crown Land) on Hay River on SoD side to go over to DEC management. Working on MOU (memorandum of understanding) with SoD with relation to some ongoing recreational use aspects. Waiting on negotiations with CoA (City of Albany) to see if the reserve can include land on both sides of the river. DEC is looking at developing just one road to the inlet only instead of many tracks.

Elissa - WICC report on the Lotterywest –Waterway protection and restoration. Outlined project progress and targets. Subsidised soil test kits for \$25 are available for land owners within the Wilson Inlet Catchment.

Shire funding of \$6000 allocated to 2km waterway fencing and 1km of remnant vegetation fencing.

Workshops on Better Soils, Better Business 16th March, Perennial Pastures 2nd March and 1080 Fox Baiting Course 4th March will be held.

Andrew – Update on recent fish kill at Parrys Inlet reported on 12th February. Thousands of fish killed including Mullet, Salmon Trout, King George and Bream. Samples were sent off and the results came back as containing *Heterosigma akashio* a mucous producing species.

John asked what happens to the dead fish. Andrew said DoW had no responsibility there but suggested it could be a Shire issue.

10. NEXT MEETING

Next meeting will be on 21st April 2010.

Meeting closed at approximately 2:30pm.

Items deferred to the April meeting:

POTENTIAL REVIEW OF WIMAG
MIDDLE GUTTER DREDGING PROPOSAL

Action items from meeting held 17 February 2010:

- 1) Action – Shire NRM officer to add information from each WIMAG meeting to the Shires note in the Denmark Bulletin (Yvette)
- 2) Action – write a letter to the Shire of Denmark, attention Yvette Caruso, in support of establishing a photo point monitoring project along the foreshore of Wilson Inlet (Mieke)
- 3) Action – DoW to determine what it will do in the future with respect to sediment algae sampling (Mieke and Kirsty)
- 4) Action – DoW to determine the best way to publicise algae information (Mieke and Kirsty)
- 5) Action – Water Corporation to advise the group at the next meeting of the situation with respect to discharges to the river that crosses Zimmermann Street (Maria)