

**WILSON INLET MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP**  
**Minutes of meeting held 24 November 2004 at the Denmark Environment Centre at 1.05pm**

**PRESENT:** George Ebbett (Chair), Zac Launay, Sandra Shakespeare, Brad Kneebone, John Zanthis, Di Harwood, Bill North, Murray Gangell, Brett Ward, Emma Huxley, Matt Thomson, Geoff Findlay, Colleen Donnelley (at 1.28 pm), Jason Froud.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Neville Boughton (invited speaker)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1.05pm.

**1. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

**Case Konig:** Sought a correction to the minutes of the last meeting – he meant scouring to the north, not to the south. He distributed a survey map of the Inlet and advised that the channel near point ‘G’ on the section F to G is now filled and this may have implications for dredging of pinch points mentioned in the Nutrient Reduction Action Plan. He suggested that WIMAG should check this. He asked if any ripping behind the bar opening had been proposed, if not he proposed it be done to loosen the sand prior to the bar being opened. George responded that it’s been done but determining if there was any benefit from it is very subjective. Mr Konig proposed that ripping being done as it may assist another channel being developed from point C to point D as an alternative to point F to point G. He estimated it should cost about \$5,000.

**Sandra Shakespeare** – suggested that some record be kept of suggestions as they are raised at meetings, so ideas are not lost. Suggested something separate to the meeting minutes and current (kept up to date).

**Brad Kneebone** – suggested we evaluate suggestions as they arise rather than leave to bar opening – will allow the meeting to consider the evaluation.

**Owen McIntosh (WISE)** - Referred members to the minutes of the most recent past meeting – he was disturbed to read comments attributed to the chair and that WIMAG should be concerned for the health of whole Inlet. Fisheries research should be taken into account in the management of the inlet and he is concerned about the lack of Fisheries Department involvement. WIMAG should be publicly accountable like council is.

Sandra took responsibility for the statements attributed to George in the minutes. George explained the difference between local government and WIMAG; being that council is elected by the people whereas WIMAG is a subcommittee appointed by the Board of the Water and Rivers Commission to provide advice to the Department of Environment on issues related to the Inlet..

Mr Konig – suggested that WIMAG finalise the draft Partnership Agreement. He also stated he would like to sit in on presentations. George reminded visitors that they could bring issues to the open forum but thereafter, meetings were closed to the public.

**Steve Bondini** - asked about the scope of WIMAG. He was concerned about Ocean Beach and yearly effects of the opening of the bar on the beach. Bill North said that winter storms affect beaches right along the south coast to a greater degree than the opening of the bar. He said there were large difference from year to year.

**Basil Schur (Green Skills)** – presented reports of stream foreshore surveys for the Denmark to Hay River Subcatchment Tributaries and the Waterways of the Upper Denmark River Catchment and the Springs Catchment (Upper Hay River) of water catchment foreshore surveys. Basil explained the methodology of foreshore condition survey and handed reports around.

**John Xanthis** – raised the issue of taking water from the catchment and any possible effects on the Inlet. Brett explained RIWI Act private rights to water and river flows and that he would be speaking later in the meeting to this issue.

**2. APOLOGIES: none**

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

**Modelling of ocean inflow and outflow**

Neville Boughton presented the results of his latest modelling of ocean inflow and outflow. (notes not completed for this vet)

Meeting agreed that Emma may attend meetings given her involvement in implementing aspects of the Nutrient Reduction Plan with the Shire and with WICC..

John Xanthis – Rivermouth Caravan Park redevelopment; people should have had time to consider this and provide comment back to Council – George acknowledged the point.

Colleen Donnolly– people’s view probably would have been overruled by Council anyway.

Murray Gangell - explained his involvement in the development to date.

John – said he was concerned with the density of the Caravan Park redevelopment.

Matt Thompson - Peter Duncan could respond to density of development – there is more of an issue with traffic.

Di Harwood – raised issues relating to mowing of the foreshore reserve area and reinstatement of reeds.

Matt – responded that this will be addressed by constructing a trail between the foreshore and the Caravan Pk land although this has yet to be agreed to.

George – is concerned about salt water couch in the area.

Sandra – has the foreshore management plan been taken into account by the council in granting development approval?

Matt – it would have been taken into account.

John – did anyone see TV reports on windfarms – believes they don’t fit with WIMAG foreshore policy.

George – said he had discussed the windfarm issue with the DoE Regional Manager and does not believe it’s WIMAG’s role to take a position on the windfarm. However he didn’t want to stifle debate and invited members to raise issues.

Colleen – suggests John get his modelling and visual amenity correct in making assertions that the windfarm modelling is wrong.

Jason Froud – what is the request for commitment from Fisheries Department all about (from last meeting’s minutes)?

George – explained it was related to Owen’s McIntosh’s proposal. WIMAG needs Fisheries at the meetings. Proposal is to Fisheries Dept on research in Inlet – to do with fish stocks.

Jason – has asked the Research Officer South Coast Estuaries to discuss further on 10<sup>th</sup> Dec (?).

Sandra – Potato farming - what is the progress with this? Is there any way to support Di on efforts with weed control?

Di – said the Shire should take responsibility for weed control on foreshore; the work needs its own budget allocation.

Matt – Emma has contacted John Moore from the Ag Dept and will meet with him on 14 December to discuss some issues including alternative methods of road verge weed control.

Di – there is a need for an environmental weeds strategy for the whole of the Shire to direct resources to identified and agreed needs.

Colleen – let’s resolve to recommend to the Shire Engineer that an environmental weeds strategy be prepared.

**Action point: That WIMAG recommend to the Shire that an Environmental Weeds Strategy be prepared**

Brad – is the problem with Council not taking weeds on because their Environmental Mission Statement does not cover weed control?

Matt – the council is committed to weed control the issue is more about what the appropriate method of control is

## **Taking of water from the Denmark Inlet Catchment**

Brett responded to John's earlier question about the implications on the health of Wilson Inlet of taking water from its catchment for public and private use. The total river flow into Wilson Inlet ranges from 64 gegalitre (GL) to 189 GL with the median flow being 115 GL (GL = one million cubic meters or one million thousand litres). Capacity of the inlet is 90 GL at 0 m AHD and 130 GL at 1 m AHD. The Denmark River flow ranges from 19 GL to 73 GL with a median flow of 37 GL. The storage capacity of possible future dam sites is 18.9 GL (DS 9), 16.6 GL (DS 18) and 5.6 GL (DS 26). Rainfall and evaporation are roughly equal and therefore cancel each other out of the water balance of the Inlet. The Denmark River has a dam on it at present. Total regional use of water is about 10 GL, of which about 6 GL is supplied by the Water Corporation and the balance taken for private use. Average public water use for Denmark is about 0.5 GL (from the Quickup Dam).

Hypothetically speaking, if the largest of the possible dam sites was constructed and say 4 GL per year were harvested from the flow of the river to fill the dam, the water taken would equate to 3.5% of the median flow of all the rivers into Wilson Inlet. The harvest of this amount of river flow is highly unlikely to have any negative impact on the health of the inlet. Other climactic factors influence the volume of freshwater entering the inlet far more than this. Under natural conditions, the flow of river water would have been considerably less than we see today.

### **4. Update on Meeting at Morley Beach re Proposed Vesting Upgrade**

**Brad Kneebone** - Met on-site on 5 November. The area is about 130 ha in a strip 3km x 200 to 300 m wide on the eastern margin of Wilson Inlet. It is currently unvested land which means DOI (ex DOLA) has responsibility for its management. By default CALM have delegated management responsibilities (but there is no active management except fire management) It is proposed to increase the effort to reserve the area to protect migratory birds. Present at the meeting were WIMAG (represented by George), CALM and landowners from 6 properties adjoining Morley Beach. It is very significant for migratory shore birds. The Federal Department of Environment have listed it as an 'Area of international significance' and flyway from Siberia, Alaska to Broome and Morley Beach.

Neighbours are not aware of any increased level of disturbance but are wary of any further limitations to the use of the area and have some sense of custodianship.

There is no immediate prospect of CALM reserving the area but it could be declared a RAMSAR wetland under International convention. To do this requires a management plan with the nomination for the wise and sustainable use of the wetlands. This listing could be extended to the whole of the Inlet but is unlikely in the short term. Brad has some information from the internet if members would like to become familiar with RAMSAR.

### **5. Update on Nutrient Surveys**

Murray – update on nutrient surveys – Audits have been done for some dairies and 2 potato farmers, addressing two action points from Nutrient Reduction Action Plan. The dairy audits were done as part of the Dairycatch project, run in the south west region.

Chris and Murray spoke to potato growers about nutrient audits. Growers are already doing some monitoring of pumped out water. Monitoring got the tail end of this, this year. Monitoring for N and P and maybe some Acid Sulphate (?) will be done again next year. Both farmers were happy to be monitored and believe they have low nutrient outputs.

With regards to the purchase of properties in the future to be bought back in future. One is leasehold and the other is freehold – neither were willing to sell in next 5 to 10 years.

## **6. MEMBER'S REPORTS**

Brett – The Salinity Situation Statement for the Denmark River Recovery Catchment presents a number of Management Options to fully reclaim the water quality of the River. The environmental, social, economic and hydrologic impacts of these options will be assessed over the next six to eight months in consultation with key stakeholders. The outcome of these assessments will then be used to prepare a Salinity Recovery Plan to guide investment and effort in the restoration of water quality of the River.

Colleen – Agreed with Brad about the potential for RAMSAR listing of Morley Beach. Has looked at the RAMSAR website.

Went to Canberra with Alex Symes and Pascoe Durtanovich to the General Assembly of Local Government Authorities. Colleen and Alex gave a presentation on the whole 'Sea change' concept and associated management of growth and tourism in a small rural coastal community. This planning has already been initiated by Denmark

Water Resources Statement of Policy – 2.9 – comment period closes 1 December.

Bill North – Ocean Beach erosion is not linked to Inlet opening – but to the time of year.

Matt Thompson- Funding for recreational boating facility scheme projects will include an area for trailer parking and replacement of the ablution blocks. Expression of interest includes;

1. Sealing the carpark –at the rivermouth and the ablution rebuild at a cost of \$50,000.
2. Sealing the Poddyshot carpark and minor dredging of channel.
3. Peaceful Bay finger jetty.

If the EOI is successful a full submission will be required.

Geoff Findlay will post details of submissions from the City of Albany for a boat ramp and finger jetty at their end of the inlet to WIMAG.

Bill – another fish cleaning area at the rivermouth would be useful

Di – does the rivermouth redevelopment include a carparking area for caravan park visitors?

John Xanthis - WIRG want to know about Poison Point and access for the public. George replied that the sign only refers to vehicles, particularly 2 WD vehicles because of problems with people bogging up the track. There area is still open to public access. The sign was put there by the Shire.

Colleen – maybe reword the sign to indicate that people can still use the area.

John – With the oyster farming, is there a disease risk with spat import? Zac said no, the project has the approval of the Health and Fisheries Departments.

Brad – at the last meeting the issue of a lack of representative from the City of Albany was raised and the possibility that John Jamieson may be willing to be the City of Albany rep. George explained that a letter from City of Albany had been received explaining that they wouldn't be providing a representative unless notified that specific issues relating to the City were to be discussed. The letter did sanction counsellors attending meetings out of their own interest. Brad mover that John Jamieson be approached to nominate for membership of WIMAG to represent the City of Albany. Motion seconded by Colleen Donnoly. Ten votes for the motion, 1 against. Motion carried.

**Action Point: That John Jamieson be approached to nominate for membership of WIMAG to represent the City of Albany.**

George suggests we hold a special meeting with the Regional Manager and decide on the direction WIMAG could take.

Sandra – The Hay riverbank opposite Marchants' is being used for camping and netting and fires. Sandra thought the Denmark to Hay River Foreshore Management Plan was never completed. She doesn't think it was completed - is it still draft? How should we manage this area – suggest we put a sign on foreshore? – Di will use some Coastcare funding to install bollards to guide cars and to manage access.– Emma will progress this.

Sandra feels there needs to be Fire Plan for the whole of the Shire.

**Action Point: Sandra will phone Emma to advise her on fire-ban wording for the sign.**

Brad wants to look at the purpose of the reserve - maybe Emma could follow this up too.

Sandra felt the Morley Beach meeting was generally a good meeting. Landholders are now more aware of issues. Prawn Rock Channel was very well used on a recent hot day

Zac – special permits are required before spat can be brought in.

Geoff Findlay – reported that he'll send Recreational Boating Facility funding proposals to all meetings for information and consideration. An X-Adventure raid series including canoes and kayaks across Inlet will be held next year – it has all been approved by Local Government and relevant Government Departments.

Jason – outlined research proposal.

George – invited to sit on an assessment panel for estuarine component of Southern Prospects. Bill is proxy for South Coast Professional Fishermens' Association

Meeting closed 4.22 pm.

**NEXT MEETING – 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in January unless it gets put back – Bill apologies – Suggestion to meet somewhere else if it's hot.**