

WILSON INLET MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 20 JUNE 2007 AT THE SHIRE OF DENMARK RECEPTION ROOM AT 1.00PM

PRESENT: George Ebbett, Geoff Findlay, Craig Carter (proxy for Basil Schur), Adrian Stratico (proxy for Danny Burkett), Helen Heydenrych, Zak Launay, John Jamieson, Dave Rushton

IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Gunby, Emanuel Ganser, Palenque Blair (Water Corporation)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1.00pm

1. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Open forum session was not required.

2. APOLOGIES

Ben Chuwen, John Xanthis, Phil Shaw

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18th April 2007 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES AND CORRESPONDENCE

- 4.1 Zak advised that his proposal to expand aquaculture lease area and establish land-based processing facility, as presented at the previous meeting, has not progressed further. Any review of the Wilson Inlet Aquaculture Strategy must be initiated by the Shire of Denmark or the Department of Fisheries.
- 4.2 Community membership – 2 vacant positions. Letter to be sent to Ben Chuwen will formally invite him to the group and contain advice in relation to the terms of appointment.
- 4.3 River mouth development – Geoff is investigating option for floating pen for the finger jetty to better accommodate dynamic water levels and has discussed with Rob Whooley. Mark Parre has recently planted out a section of foreshore, including the reclaimed area, with sedges (*Juncus priessii*), although there is concern some will be lost as inlet level rises. The foreshore walkpath project will commence soon using Southern Incentives funding. Kikuyu currently dominating the site has been sprayed.
- 4.4 Denmark River Allocation Planning, EWRs – progress update report tabled.
- 4.5 Coastal Conference – final launch scheduled for Friday 22nd June 2007. Aiming for 300 participants. The agenda is taking shape, including workshops and tours.
- 4.6 Seaplane proposal has not progressed since the last meeting. Geoff will make inquiries. Helen to check status of Shire communication with proponent.

5. WISE SUBMISSION – WILSON INLET BAR OPENINGS

George Ebbett tabled a copy of his letter to Ivor Bell of the Inlet Sustainable Environment Group Inc. (WISE) in response to its submission titled 'Wilson Inlet Bar Openings – A summary of knowledge to date'. The submission also requested WIMAG support for a five year trial of 'eastern' openings. The letter simply reiterated the position held by WIMAG, the Shire of Denmark and the Department of Water (DoW) in relation to this issue. However, the letter also conceded that due to decreasing river flows in recent years, we may need to reassess the way we manage bar openings in the future.

10. WILSON INLET FORESHORE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Helen requested this item be brought forward as she needed to leave early due to another engagement.

The Shire of Denmark will undertake a review of existing foreshore management plans (FMP) and develop one foreshore plan for Wilson Inlet. The new FMP will consolidate the existing plans as well as incorporate indigenous and ecological values. This may require collaboration with other initiatives already underway, eg. a project is being undertaken by David Guilfoyle to identify indigenous heritage sites for Wilson Inlet and the surrounding area.

It is estimated that \$20,000 will be required to complete this work with \$10,000 likely to be provided in the Shire budget. South Coast NRM has been identified as a potential funding source. The DoW may also be able to contribute funding towards this and the City of Albany also has a responsibility to be involved in some capacity.

Recommendation: Project brief (proposal) to be forwarded to the DoW and the City of Albany for comment and endorsement.

6. DENMARK STRATEGIC BOATING PLAN

Members were invited to provide feedback on The Denmark Strategic Boating Plan document (May 2007) prepared for the Shire of Denmark by Estill & Associates. The document provides a link between the data collected and collated in the Desktop Study and Stakeholder Forum Report and the presentation version of the Strategic Boating Plan.

Members expressed concern that some of the recommendations contained in the document are not practical or affordable. Furthermore, it does not identify future boating facilities and does not deliver the expected outcomes generally.

Recommendation: A letter to be sent to the Shire providing WIMAG feedback in relation to the document.

7. WILSON INLET SEAGRASS MAPPING

Dave Rushton conducted a powerpoint presentation detailing recent field work undertaken as part of a seagrass (*Ruppia*) study for Wilson Inlet. An interpretive report analysing the data collected will be produced by the DoW's Aquatic Science Branch in the coming months.

Questions regarding the study should be forwarded to Tracy Calvert at the DoW in Albany on 98410122.

8. ALBANY DRAINAGE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

Adrian Stratico provided information relating to the legislation governing Water Corporation's management of the Albany drainage district, including the breaching of the Wilson Inlet sandbar. The Water Corporation has very broad powers in relation to drainage in a designated drainage district. For example;

- The *Land Drainage Act* empowers the Water Corporation to construct and maintain drainage works within drainage districts and, with the approval of the Minister, can deepen, widen and improve any watercourse or remove obstructions.
- The *Water Corporation Act* empowers the Water Corporation to collect and dispose of wastewater and surplus water (which includes any water that accumulates to the detriment of any person) and do anything conducive or incidental to the performance of this power (This is particularly relevant to the management of the sandbar).
- The *Water Services Licensing Act* empowers the Water Corporation to provide drainage services in a controlled drainage area in accordance with its license from the Economic Regulation Authority.
- The *Water Agencies (Powers) Act* empowers the Water Corporation to enter upon any land and construct drains and other such works that may be required for drainage purposes (s83). This Act also gives them the power under the *Public Works Act* to deepen, widen, straighten, and otherwise improve, any river, stream or watercourse and remove from any river, stream, or watercourse, or from the bed thereof, any earth or stone, ...that may be calculated to impede the free flow of water therein in its natural or deepened, widened, straightened, or otherwise improved, channel.

The above information was provided by the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO). The EDO also advised that under this legislation some notification and consultation may be required depending on how significant the works are. For example, “minor works and alteration to existing works” do not require any consultation and notification. **“General works” require Water Corporation to notify landholders whose land will be entered on or negatively affected, and the relevant local council, and give them an opportunity for comment.** If there is a dispute the Minister will decide whether the works should go ahead. “Major works” require notification to those people plus advertising in a newspaper, and any interested person can comment. Apparently the Minister makes the final decision on major works.

The DoW is still waiting on written information from the Water Corporation regarding this issue following a meeting of relevant personnel in April 2007. The DoW has requested that the Water Corporation provide advice in relation to its operating licence for the Albany Drainage District and other relevant legislation especially as it applies to the Wilson Inlet sandbar.

9. HOVERCRAFT PROPOSAL

The Shire of Denmark has received an application to operate a hovercraft on Wilson Inlet from the Denmark River mouth and has referred the proposal to WIMAG for comment. Apparently the proponent is already liaising with the DPI to ensure compliance with various regulatory requirements.

Recommendation: WIMAG to advise the Shire that additional information is required, particularly in relation to storage, refuelling and foreshore access to enable informed assessment.

11. 2007/2008 COMMUNITY FORUM

Following the success of the Wilson Inlet community forum last year, there is support for a similar event this year. The intention will be for technical experts such as Malcolm Robb (DoW) to provide update of inlet health according to the water quality monitoring program (Report to the Community No. 9). This event could possibly coincide with the WINRAP review due in 2008 and collaboration with Emanuel Ganser (NRMO – Denmark & Walpole) might also be beneficial to encourage landowners in the western district (outside the Wilson Inlet catchment) to engage in waterways protection and restoration activities.

12. WILSON INLET NUTRIENT REDUCTION ACTION PLAN

Craig Carter tabled a WINRAP implementation progress update report primarily focusing on initiatives throughout the Wilson Inlet catchment area during April, May and June 2007. Copies of the report are available from Craig at craigc@southcoastnrm.com.au

Significant developments include the release of Wilson Inlet Report to the Community No.9 (currently available on the web only), Lake Sadie Revegetation Plan, Wilson Inlet catchment water quality report (draft) and project steering committee development of 2007/08 operational plan.

13. MEMBERS REPORTS

Craig Carter – Nil

Chris Gunby – Nil

John Jamieson – City of Albany to discuss the importance of a development exclusion zone to 3.5m AHD with various developers, including Landcorp. The City has recently employed part-time rangers to help manage reserves within its jurisdiction and is aware of the degradation of some foreshore areas due to inappropriate vehicle access. WISE also approached City of Albany requesting consideration of eastern opening trial proposal.

Dave Rushton – Nil

Adrian Stratico – Nil

Zak Launay – reported 70% oyster mortality rate, salinity is a major problem as it is approximately 5ppt lower than preferred levels. Apparently the Flat Oyster thrived in the inlet 60-70 years ago.

Geoff Findlay – continues to respond to ongoing inlet related issues.

George Ebbett – Shire has recently done some excavation at Poddyslot boat ramp. John Xanthis will pursue further with Rob Whooley. Also, some minor dredging works at sandbar adjacent to Prawn Rock for construction sand for the new hospital.

meeting closed 3:00pm

14. NEXT MEETING – 15th August 2007