

WILSON INLET MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 17 DECEMBER 2008 AT SHIRE OF DENMARK, COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT 1.30PM

PRESENT: George Ebbett (Chairman), Kirsty Alexander (DoW), Mark Parre, Craig Carter, Elissa Stewart (WICC), John Xanthis, Kim Stanton (CoA), Basil Schur, Ben Chuwen, Ian Osborne, Yvette Caruso (Shire of Denmark), Marisa Papalia (DoW – minutes).

1. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Case Koning: thanked WIMAG for organising the “*report to the community*”. There should have been more people there given the quality of the presentations.

Gerald Hughes: when is the public review of the Drainage Management Plan?

George: Public comment period, late January 2009 to avoid the Christmas holiday period.

2. APOLOGIES

Phil Shaw (DoF), John Dibble (Water Corporation), Tony Fitzpatrick (DPI) & Melinda Lyons

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes from the previous WIMAG meeting held on 22 October 2008 were confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

MOVED: Ben Chuwen

SECONDED: Mark Parre

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES & CORRESPONDENCE

ACTION ITEMS FROM WIMAG MEETING (22/10/08):

1. AI: Daniel to send DO logger results to Case

Kirsty presented a project update on the DoW's Data Logger study which monitors salinity, dissolved oxygen and temperature at 30 minute intervals in two locations in the inlet. A copy of the report was given to Case and another tabled to the group. It was also explained that the information is still in raw data form and will require verification. Copies available if members require.

2. AI: 5 year eastern opening trial to be added as an agenda item for next meeting.

Item on agenda for 17 December meeting.

3. AI: WIMAG members to send any additional comments on the final draft Wilson Inlet Foreshore Reserves Management Plan 2008 to George Ebbett & Basil Schur by 4th November 2008.

No action required.

4. AI: Daniel to work with Basil in actioning Morley Beach recommendations on behalf of WIMAG

Letters sent out to all parties – No replies as yet.

5. AI: Daniel to draft a review to the ToR to facilitate the extension of public open forum in accordance with the above agreement. A general review of ToR will be presented as an agenda item at the next meeting.

Item on agenda for 17 December meeting.

5. CULTURAL PROJECTS (Graham Townley) – brought forward from item 11 of agenda

Graham Townley, Regional Heritage Officer and Anthropologist with Department of Indigenous Affairs is working with South Coast NRM on heritage restoration projects in the region. Graham provided an overview of the projects he is co-ordinating in the Denmark area which include:

- Denmark River Restoration and Access Project — includes working with Green Skills to develop a heritage management plan, walk trail, weed management, revegetation & interpretive signage and brochure. Elders have been engaged to work on this project.
- Aboriginal place names – a research project being funded by the DIA “South Coast Heritage Restoration Project”. The focus will include identified sites such as Wilson Inlet and sites of significance on its foreshore. Research is being done to clarify the names of these sites and the connection with Noongar people. Initial studies demonstrate that many Noongar people lived in Denmark and west of Albany (contrary to popular misconceptions). Every place in Denmark had a local name (e.g. “Kwoora Kaip” was considered the name for Blue Lake north of Denmark). A recent interpretive sign completed with the DEC was circulated as an example.
- Wilson Inlet (Nullaki) Noongar Heritage Plan – proposes to focus on Noongar cultural heritage in and around the Wilson Inlet.

Within this context Graham is working with Noongar elders in the area and hopes to develop an integrated approach to cultural heritage planning. Graham and the Elders will engage with the WIMAG, local groups and agencies to partner in a larger heritage restoration project in the area in 2009.

George indicated that the Group would be keen to be involved in projects as described by Graham.

Graham: Wayne Webb wanted to attend today’s meeting but sends his apologies. Wayne (Elder of Bibulmun) and Vernice Gillies (Elder of Menang) would like to attend future meetings where possible. It was asked whether Wayne and Vernice could attend the next meeting and seek membership of WIMAG (either personally or by proxy).

George indicated that this would be discussed at the next item on the agenda.

John: how much of an inter-relationship with natural landscape and local Noongar people was there in Denmark?

Graham: it was far greater than what is currently known. Graham has been doing some preliminary research which indicates that the numbers in Denmark may have been greater than often documented. The dividing area between the two major language groups (Menang & Bibulmun) prior to European settlement was centred around the Denmark area. There was an intense relationship between the two groups and the DIA is seeking to promote the heritage of Noongar people in this area through the restoration and interpretation of Aboriginal sites.

Yvette: The Shire was approached by Andy Ducker (community member) who has been successful with an arts grant and had a conceptual project proposal to create artworks in the form of a fish-trap at Poison Point to commemorate indigenous values of the site. Andy was advised that such a proposal would require extensive consultation and a stakeholders list was provided to him. He was advised to seek further advice and support prior to implementation of the project. Since contacting stakeholders (e.g. DIA, DPI, Dept of Fisheries, DoW, WIMAG, local indigenous community members, Council, Denmark Cultural Arts Committee, community organisations Green Skills and Denmark Environment Centre etc.) he has had a re-think on the project based on the information he has since received.

Graham: Aboriginal sites are protected under legislation, even if they are not listed on the DIA Site Register. As such development proponents need to comply with the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972. The artist was advised by DIA to talk to the Noongar Elders representing the Bibulmun and Minang groups. Further information on the Act and heritage matters is available on the DIA website. A Section 10 approval process, for example, relates to the enhancement of the heritage values at a site with the consent of local custodians and the DIA Registrar.

George: Thanked Graham for coming to talk to WIMAG.

George: Request to stay by Case & Gerard @2.12pm. Members agreed that they could stay for the meeting. However in the event that a sensitive matter needed to be discussed they would be asked to leave for the required period.

6. WIMAG MEMBERSHIP

Yvette: Community member vacancy advertised on the Shire of Denmark's website and in the Denmark Bulletin. Applications close on 5th January 2009. John's position is vacant from 31 December 2008 as is George's position as chair. Nominations for chair position can be made by filling in a form and returning it to Marisa at DoW. A big thankyou to John and George for their time and commitment to the group.

John: Thank you for help and support over the years. The Wilson Inlet Restoration Group is keen to be a member of WIMAG and John together with other members of the WIRG will seek membership on WIMAG.

7. REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

Ben: Would like to see incorporation of an indigenous representative on WIMAG

Ian: Such a position should be filled within the context of community members as per ToR as labelling a position as an indigenous rep is considered racism. Such a rep should be considered in the realms of a community rep within the current ToR.

Basil: Suggested that it be worded "community rep reflecting indigenous interest" in the ToR and that WIMAG ask DIA to facilitate finding a suitable person.

Kirsty: DIA could take it to the indigenous heritage reference groups that they administer.

Yvette: Agree with need for indigenous involvement and question the need for a rep from DEC? Also some admin changes such as "chairman" to "chairperson" and clarification on membership such as DoW – one rep but one officer to take minutes. Inclusion of member's current contact details to be attached to ToR for information.

Basil: Indicated that DEC probably wouldn't want a rep due to lack of resources and also that they don't have any huge land holdings in the area but it would be good to keep them in the loop where it impacts on their land.

Yvette: Asked whether WIMAG would consider dealing with issues relating to Parry and Irwin Inlets and whether we need to change terms of reference to this effect?

General discussion about inclusion of Irwin and Parry's Inlets into the Terms of Reference and inclusion of two additional reps from these areas on WIMAG.

Basil: supports that the Terms of Reference be updated to include the two other main estuaries and the possible need for two more reps.

John: Are there major issues with these inlets?

Kirsty: the two estuaries are considered high value and high threat and are a priority for management plans to be prepared to protect their values. DoW is aware of many issues, such as bar management and nutrient input in these estuaries.

Basil put a motion to the group:

“WIMAG consider a review of its terms of reference to include Irwin and Parry’s Inlets and to expand membership to incorporate representation from these two areas.”

8 FOR AND 2 AGAINST (Ben & John)

Ben: currently there are no provisions for a member being represented by a proxy. Believe some provisions should be in place particularly where a member can not attend a meeting when a critical issue is being voted on.

Kirsty: explained that as a community rep you are not representing a group. It is difficult to replicate your views. It needs to be made clear in the terms of reference that you can nominate a proxy but they would need to go through the same process as being appointed to WIMAG i.e. the member would need to go through the selection criteria process. After this the proxy can attend meetings on your behalf.

Ian: suggested that attendance provisions need to be incorporated into the ToR to the effect that if you miss x number of meetings in a row then your interest in the group should be questioned and your membership should be reviewed.

ACTIONS:

Yvette: To research previous shire proposal to include the two other estuaries and update it. Item to be taken to council for ‘in principle’ support.

Marisa: To update terms of reference in accordance with issues as discussed above and any other minor admin changes and circulate updated terms of reference before the next meeting.

8. 5 YEAR EASTERN OPENING TRIAL

Kirsty explained that where the openings occur is not considered to have a great impact on the condition of the inlet when compared to other factors. As a result this is something that has been left up to community opinion which is gauged through the Shire of Denmark. The location of the sandbar opening will be reviewed as part of the review of WINRAP which will be completed in 2009.

Basil: Current WIMAG policy on the bar opening remains. With regard to the appropriateness of an eastern opening - new science needs to reflect a need for change or a change in community opinion could lead to change. If these things don't occur then things stay as they are. There are, however some additional issues from other specific groups: such as surf life saving club etc. as survey from the Shire is not going to pick up specific stakeholder groups. Basil's opinion is that these groups should be asked their views directly.

George: mentioned that a survey went to 1,000 random residents of Denmark, computer generated. 1,000 surveys is considered a large portion of the Denmark community. Current science is that it doesn't matter where the opening is so hopefully the survey will give the Shire a good understanding of community opinion.

The surf life saving club will not comment as they have indicated in the past that they do not have a position on the opening.

Kim: Did any surveys go to the Albany side?

George: No

9. WILSON INLET RESTORATION GROUP (JOHN)

John provided an overview in terms of where the group is at with the new Council and provided a report to the Group which is attached to the minutes.

George: Thanks to John for his time and commitment to WIMAG over the years.

10. PROGRESS OF DRAINAGE REVIEW (KIRSTY)

This was discussed in public open forum.

11. WILSON INLET FORESHORE MANAGEMENT PLAN (BASIL)

Basil: The plan has been endorsed and finalized by Council at its November meeting. The management plan can be accessed via the Shire's web site. Keen to get Council to start implementing it and budgeting for works/projects within the plan given that so much work has gone into it. Basil sees a real opportunity to ensure that the plan doesn't sit on a shelf but on ground works are achieved.

Yvette: suggested that priority projects be identified by WIMAG for implementation purposes. This will assist Council planning for budget allocations towards works.

MOTION:

"WIMAG write to the Shire of Denmark commending them on finalising the Wilson Inlet Foreshore Reserves Management Plan and urges the Shire to implement the recommendations outlined in the plan. WIMAG is happy to assist in budget planning and prioritising future works."

MOVED: Basil
SECONDED: Ben

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ACTION:

Marisa: To write letter to Shire of Denmark in regard to above WIMAG resolution.

12. MEMBERS REPORTS

John: Good year for recreation at prawn rock channel, good marine exchange happening.

Ben: The recent Shire's community survey wording was leading. Question to WIMAG, has it ever made any recommendations to Council on the locations of the opening as there was a reference to this in the recent survey distributed.

George: No

Ben: Scientific evidence is available to demonstrate that there is a 60% difference between the two locations of the openings. Referring to Neville Broughtons work.

George: WIMAG refers to DOW for its advice. WIMAG has an endorsed policy that states that community opinion will determine the location as to date the science doesn't demonstrate the need for a preference.

Kirsty: Don't think anyone in DoW disagrees with Neville's work. The 60% refers to marine exchange and this is only one factor. Some measures used in the past include: algal blooms (*Ruppia*), levels of deoxidisation for e.g. but these factors are being reviewed as part of the WINRAP review.

Ben: what is the health of the inlet?

Kirsty: Currently there is no specific measure of the health of an estuary, nor is there likely to be as all estuaries are so different. The review of the action plan will look at appropriate indicators of health in Wilson.

Ben: Totally different suite of things to look at.

Kim: City's Reserve's Officer will be attending future meetings. Work's Department asked whether road flooding had occurred on any the roads in the eastern area of the inlet around Youngs in the last November storm event.

Mark: will ask at the next Young's Progress Association meeting.

Kim: City is tracking down a copy of the Foreshore Management Plan for Hay River to Nullaki.

Marisa: Copy has been provided to the City via Basil at Green Skills.

Kim: Hay river rail trail extension to Youngs becoming an issue with landowners.

Basil: Main Roads are not keen on their bridges being used for cycling and walking.

Craig: no longer WINRAP officer. New WINRAP officer, *Elissa Stewart* will attend future meetings. New position @ Greenskills as *Community Engagement Officer* which covers an area from Youngs to Walpole which includes approx. 6,000 people. Position funded through South Coast NRM. The position will look at community NRM issues, running workshops to engage the community in terms of sustainable development etc. Craig asked whether in his new role he could still attend meetings on as needs basis.

George: given history with WINRAP and current position on a as needs basis is fine.

Elissa – WINRAP update, some additional fencing works, stock crossing, new diary farm in the catchment, Wilson inlet reduction plan has been extended to 30 June 2009. Hope to work with SCNRM for future funding. Soil and fertility workshop on 10th March at Denmark Agriculture College. (Copy of report to be provided with minutes)

George: thanked everyone for their attendance and commitment to WIMAG. Being here for 15 years as chair doesn't have an opinion on the location of the bar, great working with the community who has a lot of passion and opinion on issues relating to the inlet.

13. NEXT MEETING

Next WIMAG meeting will be held Wed 18 February 2009 (third Wednesday) at Shire of Denmark offices.

Meeting closed 3:45pm.

ACTION ITEMS FROM WIMAG MEETING OF 17/12/08:

- 1) **AI:** Yvette to research previous shire proposal to include the two other estuaries and update it. Item to be taken to council for 'in principle' support.
- 2) **AI:** Marisa to update terms of reference in accordance with issues as discussed above and any other minor admin changes and circulate updated terms of reference before the next meeting.
- 3) **AI:** Marisa to write letter to Shire of Denmark in regard to WIMAG resolution made above in item 11: *"WIMAG write to the Shire of Denmark commending them on finalising the Wilson Inlet Foreshore Reserves Management Plan and urges the Shire to implement the recommendations outlined in the plan. WIMAG is happy to assist in budget planning and prioritising future works."*