

WILSON INLET MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 15 APRIL 2009 AT SHIRE OF DENMARK, RECEPTION ROOM AT 1.00PM

PRESENT: Basil Schur (Vice Chair), Kirsty Alexander (DoW), Phil Shaw (DoF) Mark Parre, John Xanthis, Warren Miller, Kim Stanton (CoA), Yvette Caruso (SoD), Marisa Papalia (DoW – minutes).

1. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Zac Launay: has a mussel farm on the inlet. Believes an eastern opening can maintain Prawn Rock Channel. Last year Prawn Rock channel was not useable and no one complained. So options for an eastern opening should be considered.

Case Koning: secretary of the Wilson Inlet Restoration Group however comments made today are his personal view. Case has raised the issue of dredging at both the mouth and the delta which was first discussed in 1994. WIMAG has never supported dredging. Interesting to note that Zak never supported an eastern opening while he was a member of WIMAG. Poor marine exchange is not an eastern or western opening issue but it's the issue of the delta. This group procrastinates over issues and nothing gets done. WINRAP has only had two meetings to report to the community about what gets achieved. Suggest that WINRAP should report at least twice a year. Concern expressed about public/community views over the eastern and western opening. There has been no salt water in the inlet this year.

Question to Kirsty regarding availability of sediment report?

Kirsty: the report has not been finalised but we can provide a draft report.

Owen MacIntosh: Strong believer that we should be trialling an eastern opening – it aligns with a rip that would make it work. Provided photos of inlet to show how clean it was in May 1957. A photo from the Batte Library of 1920s shows 700 yards from the cliff to the Nullaki and the opening aligned with the Dunsy Rip. In 1946 the bar was 200 metres wide. Western openings have allowed sand to build up on the Nullaki Peninsula. Believes nutrients are staying in the system and not getting flushed out. Photo of 1990 shows an eastern opening with more beach – this is what the community is missing out on. Need to trial an eastern opening. The number of smaller openings has created restrictions in flow movement. Trial of eastern opening should happen this year. Eastern openings have never been measured. The sand ridges have only built up since 2000. They are growing at an extreme rate – probably 5 metres high. The longer it is left the higher the cost to remove the sand.

Fred Scott: Reports done historically that the openings were equal. But we see only western and central openings. Nothing has been done about eastern openings. We should have one done this year – see what people want.

Case: requested permission to sit-in on the meeting. Basil sought consent from the members who had no objections with this request.

2. APOLOGIES

Elissa Stewart (WICC), Melinda Lyons, George Ebbett (Chair), Ian Osborne, Ben Chewen & Sandra Maciejewski (CoA),

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes from the previous WIMAG meeting held on 17 February 2009 were confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

MOVED: Kim Stanton

SECONDED: Basil Schur

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES & CORRESPONDENCE

4.1 ACTION ITEMS FROM WIMAG MEETING (17/02/09):

4.1.1 **Murray to ask Yvette to formalise an operational plan in relation to The Foreshore Reserves Management Plan.** *Discussed at Item 8.*

4.1.2 **George: To meet with the Denmark Shire's Engineer and discuss cheaper options for remediation work associated with recommendation 2.5b. Installing a barrier aimed at preventing further riverbank degradation and formalizing boat mooring.** *George to report outcome at next meeting.*

4.2 CORRESPONDENCE:

4.2.1 **Shire of Denmark** sent a letter advising of Council's decision on the DEMAG idea which was considered at its February 2009 meeting. The motion was lost 5/7. Reasons against the motion: Council wanted an independent management body for the other inlets and that Councillors thought the other inlets were in okay condition. George advised Councillors that the water quality of the other inlets was not good. Chris Gunby from the DoW had also given a presentation to Council prior to the meeting. *End of the matter for now.*

4.2.2 **Shire of Denmark** sent a letter inviting submissions on the 2009/10 municipal budget. *This item to be discussed as part of Item 8.*

4.2.3 **Shire of Denmark** sent a letter regarding various community grant opportunities for community groups. *Noted.*

4.2.4 **Letter of resignation from Melinda Lyons** received. Melinda expressed thanks for the opportunity to participate in the committee and would like to continue to be in contact with the committee on any matters which may arise in relation to the Living Lakes Network and the Wilson Inlet. *Thanks to Melinda for her input into WIMAG over the years.*

Kirsty: As a result of receiving Melinda's resignation and given the recent process for appointing a community representative on the committee both the Shire and DoW thought it appropriate to appoint Warren Miller who had applied and met all criteria to become a rep under this process. Welcome Warren.

4.2.5 **Department of Environment and Conservation** replied to WIMAG's Morley Beach letter which is summarised:

- WIMAG decisions will be useful for consideration into the future planning of the inlet and management; protection of UCL for conservation purposes is unlikely to increase the long term protection of the migratory or resident waterbirds. Broader community support and connectivity of habitat would be required.
- UCL responsibility lies with the DPI. DEC would consider inclusion of the UCL if after assessment, it was found to meet the criteria of comprehensiveness, adequacy & representativeness for the reserve system. DEC will take every opportunity to contribute to the management of the biodiversity values of Morley beach.
- The area can be nominated under the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention). Such nominations need to be submitted to DEC. For listing consideration by the Australian Government a number of documents need to be prepared.

- DEC supports ongoing bird surveys at Wilson Inlet.
- DEC staff at the South Coast Region office and the South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc should be contacted for any further assistance.

General Discussion:

- Follow up on this letter could commence. Is the group happy for this to occur? Yes
- How much data do Birds Australia have? *10 years*
- An issue has arisen that someone wants to train horses on Morley Beach. This issue will require management although it will be difficult to police given the UCL status of reserve. *Noted*

5. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

All agreed to changes as circulated in the track changes version of the Terms of Reference as at 9 April 2009. *This to be agreed to at next meeting with a quorum.*

6. DRAINAGE REVIEW UPDATE

The review is at the end of the process. The review came about from the EPA referral in 2007 which resulted in a non opening. WIMAG, DoW and Water Corporation were asked to deal with the issue. Key agency and stakeholder groups were established. Advice from the EPA about the review and agencies will use the tool for subsequent openings and how decision are made. This will be used this year for the first time. Changes include: bar likely to be opened earlier and at a lower level, better consideration of climatic conditions and rainfall predictions. Kirsty hopes to have the report finalised by the end of April. It is proposed to hold presentations to the Shire of Denmark and City of Albany on the final report.

7. RECENT ISSUES AT PODDY SHOT

Some enquiries were received by the DoW regarding water quality, smells and presence of weeds. A sample was taken and it was confirmed that there was a bacteria bloom. Kirsty, Dan (DoW) and Kim Barrow (Shire President) meet with local residents (including Sharon Clark) soon after and discussed issues such as dredging of the boat ramp and removal of accumulated weed. DoW indicated support of the removal of the ruppia from the beach before Easter and Christmas and at other times on an as needs basis. Poddy Shot has been identified as a recreational node in the FMP and it has been difficult for boats to launch from this site and the smell has lead to complaints. The DoW will contribute \$5,000 to assist the Shire with getting rid of the build up on this occasion. DoW indicated that an agreed process should be established by the Shire, DoW and residents to deal with future build up.

8. WILSON INLET FORESHORE MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Yvette has prepared an indicative NRM budget for 09 -10 financial year and have asked for some budget items for 09 -10 year related to Wilson Inlet Foreshore Management Plan (WIFMP) which are to be discussed at Council BUDGET meetings. These budget items include: - \$10,000 for implementation of WIFMP; \$5,000 for rollover of WIMAG unexpended accumulated funds for future WIMAG expenses; \$5,000+ rollover of WIMAG unexpended accumulated funds for Denmark River mouth planting; \$10,000 for Poison Point recreational facility and access improvements; \$20,000 to reconstruct Wilson Inlet Heritage Shelters.

Other preparatory items that Yvette has been working on to progress FMP include: prepared and presented Officer Report to Council to obtain support for Denmark River mouth planting; meeting with Dan Endacott of DoW to discuss development of 'operational/implementation plan' for FMP. There are also additional items that are

recommendations within the FMP that are being progressed through separate budgets and separate projects for e.g. dieback signage, environmental education awareness raising projects, weed eradication projects. So there is actually quite a bit of behind the scenes work going on to progress implementation of the FMP.

General Discussion:

- Trying to progress on how to establish priorities when the plan has a number of recommendations listed as a high priority is extremely difficult.
- Is it possible to cost out all of the recommendations to gain an understanding of the money required to implement the whole plan?
- If costings are going to be done – these should be done for the key priorities first as it would be very time consuming to do.
- Some priorities will need to be staged or subject to other works so fully costing each recommendation could be problematic.
- Without costings, implementation of the FMP may not occur and items need to be considered for the 09/10 budget.
- The Shire's NRM officer plays a role regarding the implementation of the FMP as do other directorates within the Shire, such as Director of Infrastructure projects which is sometimes outside the scope of the NRM Officer role.
- Consideration of WIMAG to assist with determining priorities outside the meeting process.
- Beneficial to focus on priorities that are likely to get grant funding for Local Government to match.

MOTION:

A letter to the Shire requesting WIMAG to meet with the Directors of Infrastructure Services and Planning Sustainability to determine provisional costings to assist with budgeting planning for implementation of the recommendations of the Foreshore Management Plan.

GENERAL AGREEMENT (Yvette did not vote)

9. POSSIBLE EASTERN OPENING

Following on from prior meetings Basil has put together information/concept regarding what needs to be done from a technical and operations perspective to consider a request for an eastern opening.

Ben Chuwen has also provided information regarding some costings: to survey the channel from the beach to the inlet @ approx. \$1,000 per year and to excavate a 50 metre channel through the sand ridge at Ocean Beach to prepare for a bar opening at the 440 metre mark: \$15,000

General Discussion:

- Some concern was expressed about the fact that there was much discussion about this issue at the last meeting.
- Some of the community is of the opinion that an eastern opening needs to be trialled and monitored so comparisons can be made as to whether which is the best outcome both environmentally and socially.
- The DoW's position remains that based on past work opening location is not considered to have a significant impact on overall inlet condition, particularly compared with catchment impacts. Opening location has generated much public debate over the years, with strong advocates for both eastern and western options within the community. Many of the issues surrounding opening location are considered to be social issues, therefore the option with most community support (west) has been supported. The DoW can not comment on this further, opening location is up to the community to decide.

- Department of Fisheries has a similar view to the DoW. High marine exchange is the desired outcome from a bar opening and the way to achieve this is a hydro engineering issue not a fisheries management issue. The location of the bar opening is a social issue that needs to be resolved through consultation with the local community that includes information workshops dealing with the issues surrounding east and west openings.
- Previous motion regarding eastern opening of 10/2 was largely based on the fact that there is little information regarding the eastern opening. Previous WIMAG member, Des Wolfe has in the past indicated favour for a 3 year trial. Without a trial we will never know.
- Recreational fishing activities are reduced with a western opening.
- Computer modelling used by the DoW is incorrect.
- Need to consider modelling in the absence of data. Barometer of social issues is the Shire of Denmark and DoW believes it is largely a social issue.
- What it is that people want? Easties want better marine exchange then maybe dredging should be trialled whilst maintaining prawn rock channel. There are issues that impact on the Inlet beside the location of the opening such as damming in the catchment increasing. This is, and will continue to be a huge issue. Maybe the decision should be put to Council in terms of what to do.
- There is a *Policy Protocol* to follow if WIMAG decided that an eastern opening should be trialled they just have to write to the Shire requesting this.
- DoW's next job after the drainage review is the WINRAP review which will look at the community views/social values.
- The least we can do is put the information together in terms of: maintaining Prawn Rock Channel; construction of an eastern opening; and impacts. The decision makers will then have everything they need to make a decision.
- What would it cost for monitoring an eastern opening?
- DoW doesn't monitor marine exchange and does not have a hydrodynamic model of the inlet. Current monitoring does show salinity at monitoring sites around the inlet and this information can be extrapolated to provide comment that marine exchange was poorer than in other years. However, data collected during the late November rains has yet to be analysed. It is likely marine exchange was greater during this time. This emphasises that many of the factors that govern marine exchange are factors outside of our control such as rainfall and oceanic conditions.

The following MOTION was considered but not voted on:

“WIMAG seek information regarding costing on the following points:

- *Technical and costing advice on how to maintain Prawn Rock Channel (including with an Eastern Opening).*
- *Technical or extra cost implications of constructing an Eastern opening (given the dunes)*
- *Technical or extra cost implications of properly monitoring the results of an eastern Opening (both in year 1 and subsequent years)- in terms of dimensions of the channel, water exchange, and water quality monitoring, some of which would already be happening.*

Advice be sort from the Shire of Denmark, Water Corporation and Department of Water on the above.”

- The above motion was questioned in terms of what it is that we are trying to achieve – we are never going to make everyone happy.
- The Community survey showed majority of people want an eastern opening. Although the survey also discussed other issues and did not provide any information regarding background information on the Inlet and what the issues are.
- The Shire has not presented this information to WIMAG.

- It will be difficult to inform people as there is so much information and some of it is not good.

The following MOTION was considered but not voted on:

“Given recent survey results community views have changed. WIMAG suggests that a more comprehensive survey be carried out to gauge more accurate community opinion on the location of the bar opening.”

It was decided that the above be discussed at the June meeting as this is a contentious issue and a quorum is required to move such a motion.

10. BAR OPENING OPTION FOR DISCUSSION

John presented a hand out regarding this item that was circulated. *Copy attached.* Consideration of this proposal could provide better marine exchange and stormwater management.

Unfortunately the meeting was longer than usual and had to be closed as DoW staff had to be back in Albany for another appointment. John’s hand out will be circulated with June’s agenda.

11. MEMBERS REPORTS

12. NEXT MEETING

Next WIMAG meeting will be held **Wednesday 17th June 2009** (third Wednesday) at Shire of Denmark offices.

Meeting closed 3:54pm.