

Howard Water Advisory Committee

Notes for Meeting 9: Tuesday, 2nd may 2017

5.00pm –7.00pm, Whitewood Hall, Howard Springs Reserve

Present:, Dave Liddle, Jan Hintze, Mathew Salter, Kate Peake, David Ciaravolo, Shane Papworth , Gerry Wood, Bill Risk, Mardi Miles (DENR).

Apologies: Maree Bredhauer, Maria Kraatz, Mark Smith, Donna Jackson.

1. Welcome and apologies

2. Notes of previous meeting

Actions from previous meetings to be included:

ACTION – Department to look into options for implementing a representative installation of metering in order to better understand water use across the stock and domestic user group. What scale of metering would be required for this to provide useful information? At what cost? Logistics?

Accepted.

3. HWAC communications

Water licensing decision portal

Demonstration of the new online spatial licence information tool.

Feedback received:

- System is a little bit slow. May improve once it goes live
- A noticeboard for trade may be beneficial, to allow willing buyers/sellers to facilitate trade.
- The department does not participate in matching willing sellers/buyers, this is up to individuals to facilitate, and the department to process.
- The portal will be going live in about two weeks.

Kate Peake – NT winner of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Women's award.

As part of the award, Kate has received funding to undertake a project around water stewardship in the rural area. This project will include education resources and a survey. The aim of the survey is to gauge public perception and level of education.

What works, and how to get the information out there.

And suggestions/feedback to be provided to Kate

4. Stock and domestic management options

Land owners or occupiers who are not required to hold a water extraction licence, and only extract for stock and domestic purposes could not be compelled to notify the Department of their domestic groundwater usage unless water restrictions pursuant to a notice under Section 96 are in effect.

Modelling was undertaken to determine the impact of rural residential water use on the resource. Reducing the amount taken per household from 3.5ML/year to 2.5ML/year only delays the impact. There is still an impact on the resource, however it occurs later in the dry season.

Is the current level of extraction (particularly in the over-allocated Central and West zones) acceptable.

The current level in these zone is closer to 50:50 rather than 80:20.

Some impact is being seen in Whitewood jungle.

Strategies need to be developed to reduce extraction levels over time

What is the viability of rainwater tanks, what size is required.

5. Security and reliability

Information was provided around security and reliability. Current modelling has been used to determine how often full allocation for existing users (non stock and domestic) would be received.

The types of security levels were discussed, should public water supply hold total security, and only be reduced in emergency situations. The bores in the planning area licensed for public water use are considered to be highly important to Power & Water to protect their water network.

Management tools such as announced allocations are available to reduce the maximum allowable extraction limit for each water year.

This is seen as inequitable, as unlicensed users such as rural residential users face no reductions in years of lower water availability

Action: Rework the reliability levels for all scenarios (eg by users/levels of security).

The option of introducing water restrictions in the zones was discussed. This included discussion about what water restrictions would look like, and what would be considered to be trigger levels.

The security level of existing users versus new users was discussed. Should they have the same security level, or should investment and development be recognised.

Action: provide A3 map of water extraction licence applications received in the planning area for existing users.

6. Strategic Indigenous Reserve

Further discussion was held regarding the committees response to the Strategic Indigenous Reserve (SIR) options paper.

There is no straightforward way to allocate a SIR for the planning area compared to other areas. The area of aboriginal land is small, and is located in areas which are considered to be over-allocated where there is limited opportunity to allocate water.

7. Other business

Nil

8. Next Meeting – 6th June