

RAPID CREEK WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES - MEETING 3

Date: 14 June 2017
Time: 2:00pm – 4:00pm
Location: Charles Darwin University, Blue 2, Level 2, Room 24a
Ellengowan Drive, Casuarina

Chairperson: Ian Lancaster KSI Land and Water Planning

Secretariat: Teegan Thring Water Resources Division (DENR)

Attendees:

Chris Daly	Environmental Health
Darren Skuse	Northern Territory Airports
Dean McAdam	Parks and Wildlife (DTC)
Donna Jackson	Larrakia Nation
Lisa Peters	Rapid Creek Landcare Group
Emma Lewis	Darwin City Council
Georgina Farr	Northern Territory Airports
Julia Schult	Aquatic Health, Water Resources Division (DENR)
Jonathon Burcher	NT EPA
Karen Gibb	Charles Darwin University
Neal Adamson	Department of Defence
Tim Moore	Community Representative

Apologies: Ian Kew Northern Territory Airports

INTRODUCTION

Ian opened the meeting with discussion around the recent media stories of Enterococci and bacteria levels in Rapid Creek. Ian advised that he would write to the Controller of Water Resources after the meeting to provide advice on what the committee discussed and some ideas on the best ways of keeping on top of elevated bacteria levels.

The Committee was very supportive of increased monitoring activities proposed by Darwin International Airport and the Department of Defence and the continued monitoring undertaken by the Aquatic Health Unit.

The Committee also agreed that some form of signage providing general information was supported. There was some support for general signage about bacteria levels, providing advice and information.

PRESENTATIONS

Jonathon Burcher from NT EPA presented on the Storm Water Strategy for Rapid Creek, developed by EPA. The presentation had particular emphasis on the recent report by the Charles Darwin University report, prepared by Dr Miriam Kaestli titled 'Summary of Technical Report, Analysis of Faecal Indicators & Abiotic Water Parameters from upper Rapid Creek, February 2009 – February 2016.' Jonathon's presentation was

about looking at the assessment framework, handling enquiries, declaration of Beneficial Uses and gauging where EPA can become involved.

There was discussion around 'Fish Kills'. There is a database available for the NT, all fish kills are lodged and recorded in the database. There is an App for smart phones available: <https://nt.gov.au/marine/recreational-fishing/report-injured-marine-animals-fishkills-ghostnets>

Action: Teegan / Ian to contact John Pudney from Power Water seeking water quality data and see what the water quality levels of the Marrara Golf Links is.

Data sharing – currently there is no generic data bank for sharing data. Each stakeholder carries out their own monitoring and storing of data. Some is shared across stakeholders.

Chris Daly from Environmental Health spoke about PFAS. The Minister launched a report in November 2016 on the traditional harvesting of food; this was held up by the food standards of NZ. The intention is to release phase 2 of the report based on Aquatic Seafood in the next couple of weeks. The report is now sitting with the Minister for endorsement. If the results are favourable, signage will be removed from Ludmilla and Rapid Creeks.

The signage that Environmental Health placed in Ludmilla and Rapid Creeks is in conjunction with other investigations around Australia. This led to an NT working group known as the Interagency Working Group. NTG have engaged CDU to carry out some work. Signs will remain in the Catchment until the findings of the stage 2 report are released. If findings are positive, signage will be removed.

PFAS will remain a standard agenda item at each meeting.

There are plans to construct a detention basin in the catchment. It was suggested that DIPL carry out water sampling once it is completed.

PREVIOUS ACTION ITEMS

Action	Status
Teegan confirm with Department of Health as to how long the PFAS signage will be in place for.	Noted and completed – Chris Daly presented.
Report on PFAS as a standard agenda item at each meeting – report on data.	Noted and completed
Emma to follow up the status of the review of the storm water and compliance.	Carry over to next Committee meeting
Fishing Platform – Parks and Wildlife maintain the platform, though it doesn't belong to them. City of Darwin and Department of Infrastructure should be responsible. Further discussions required	Carry over to next Committee meeting
Promoting the hydrograph or camera for 'real time' data for alerting flooding within the flood zone. Teegan to discuss with the Water Assessment team	The Rapid Creek gauging station is operational. The data is available on our Water Data Portal along with all our sites: https://nt.gov.au/environment/water/water-data-portal The data on this website is updated 4-times a day during wet season. Residents can access the data however due the flashy nature of the catchment it is unlikely that the information

	<p>will be any use for flood information/alerts. The logger on site actually records data every 2 minutes during higher levels, and sends out alarms to emergency services triggered by water level.</p> <p>Due to the extremely limited time frames the Department doesn't provide alerts to the public. This is a problematic area as in order for alerts to be provided for flash flooding, they need to be provided early to be effective. By providing alerts early, 9 out of 10 alerts will not result in flooding which means those receiving the alerts tend to become complacent. Alerts get ignored and then the real flood comes.</p>
Larrakia Nation proposed regular update to meetings on the Ranger/Marine program within the Catchment	Donna mentioned that Rangers could assist with sampling and expand the sampling sites. It would be a fee for service program run by Larrakia Nation.
Teegan contact EPA to enquire about the report and option of NT EPA presenting at the next meeting	Noted and completed.
Funding with the Territory NRM Board. Report back to the Committee with an update	Ian to report on.

UPDATES WITHIN THE CATCHMENT

Department of Defence

Neal Adamson - Environmental Officer, RAAF Darwin, RAAF Tindal

It is business as usual. There is ongoing work with major projects in development and currently in the PFAS development phase.

Department of Tourism and Culture (Parks & Wildlife)

Dean McAdam -

Nigel responded to a recent Ministerial about Rapid Creek seeking funding for fencing and gates on land near CDU. After submitting the Ministerial, Parks and Wildlife found out that the land in response wasn't on Parks and Wildlife land and is actually Crown Land.

Charles Darwin University

Karen Gibb – Professor and Director

Current and recently completed projects:

- Masters Project by Ms Shreya Patel** - Evaluation of specificity and sensitivity of Human Associated Markers against non-target animal species for Microbial Source Tracking – ongoing.
- Honours Project by Ms Zarah Hockey** - Developing better DNA human fecal markers for environmental surveillance – ongoing
- Research Report completed May 2017 by Dr. Anna Padovan** - Reducing uncertainty through more accurate tests for *Escherichia coli* human fecal markers and *Vibrio* spp.

4. Consultancy Report completed May 2017 by Dr Niels Munksgaard - Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) testing in sediment and aquatic foods from Darwin Harbour

Larrakia Nation

Donna Jackson – Ranger Manager

Business as usual at Larrakia. Donna mentioned there were high levels of Enterococci reported. Questions were asked whether the blocks near the red footbridge are still on septics or whether they have been updated. Donna is working with CDU to estimate how much seafood people eat out of the creek.

Action: Check with Building Services regarding remnant septic systems in the catchment.

Rapid Creek Landcare Group

Lisa Peters – Community Representative

The Rapid Creek Landcare Group applied for an environmental grant to carry out works in the lower catchment, upstream from the bridge at the mouth. Currently undertaking weed control upstream in the Catchment. Should find out in a week or so whether the application was successful or not. Apart from that it is business as usual.

Northern Territory Airports

Darren Skuse

The Airport Master Plan is nearly finalised. The report was circulated through this Committee and other stakeholders. There have been a couple of stories in the media about the report. There is continual work with Department of Defence; apart from that it is business as usual.

DIA are currently working with CDU in regards to the faecal tracking in Rapid Creek. DIA are looking for partners and will forward onto the NT Government and City of Darwin.

City of Darwin

Emma Lewis – Waste Management Project Officer

City of Darwin (CoD) is replacing a section of the footpath on Charles Eaton Drive. The Contractor is preparing the environmental plan. Works include replacing the asphalt only. If anyone would like further information Emma can forward on the details of the Project Manager. Brad Farrell and Jamie Lewis are the CoD contacts for this job.

Action: Emma to send contact details to RCLG.

The meeting concluded with discussion around providing advice to the Controller of Water Resources. Ian will provide formal advice regarding sampling and research. A letter will be circulated to the Committee for comment.

The question was asked whether signs are required for Enterococci.

Further discussion was held around signage and whether placing general signage for bacteria levels, swimming and PFAS would be the right thing to do. Lisa mentioned that placing any sort of signage in regards to the risks of swimming or bacteria could be risky. The area would have to be regularly monitored. It was discussed that signage could be placed along the Catchment as a forewarning advising that bacteria levels fluctuate, when they peak and that swimming isn't advised etc.

More data on levels is required. If safety standards are exceeded, then something will need to happen. Potential wording for signage could be something like 'swim at your own risk, elevated levels'. Find out if there is any legal responsibility and who would be interested in placing the signs up.

REVISION OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

After discussions at the February meeting, the NT Natural Resource Management Board's round of funding closed. We were pushed for time to apply. The next round will be early 2018. In order to be prepared we would like to get a plan in place of how we want the document to look and what is to be included. This will be an ongoing item on the agenda for the Committee to work towards.

Meeting concluded: 4:00pm