

Workshop report and minutes

Meeting opened 5.00pm

1. Attendance

PRESENT:

Members

Dr Jocelyn Davies (Chair)	CDU University Fellow/ geographer
Robyn Grey-Gardner	Alice Springs resident (remote water & water quality expert)
Richie Hayes	Agriculture/Horticulture representative
Adam Davis	Power & Water Corporation
Rod Cramer	Rural residents association
Alex Read	Arid Lands Environment Centre (proxy for Jimmy Cocking)
Mr Glenn Marshall	Alice Springs resident (urban water efficiency expert)

NT Government representatives (Non-members)

Robbie Henderson	Water Planner (DENR)
Peter Somerville	Manager Planning & Development (DIPL)

Apologies:

Wendy Stuart	Central Land Council
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Absent:

Ms Veronica Lynch	Indigenous / AAPA representative
Mr Eli Melki	Alice Springs Town Council

STATUS OF EXISTING ACTION ITEMS

1	Write up a visual reminder of the water use systems map	Robbie Henderson	Completed & distributed
2	Forward agenda: review outcomes of the demand management workshop and formulate recommendations to a) DENR and b) other agencies, as appropriate	Robbie Henderson / ASWAC	To be undertaken during this meeting (#6)
3	Forward agenda: Discuss terms of reference for the review of the Alice Springs Water Allocation Plan	Robbie Henderson / ASWAC	To be progressed during this meeting (#6)

NEW ACTION ITEMS

1	Prepare a Memorandum to the Executive Director, Water resources to provide recommendations for DENR involvement in demand management activities	ASWAC / exec support from Robbie Henderson	Prior to next ASWAC meeting
2	PWC to provide update on schools program and smart metering	PWC	24/10/18
3	Email the <i>RoadMAP to a DesertSMART Town</i> review survey to ASWAC members	Alex Read	When required
4	Answer question taken on notice regarding water amendment Bills and their application to mining or petroleum exploration. Answer to be emailed to ASWAC members.	DENR	ASAP

5	ALEC to write to the Department seeking to change Alex and Jimmy's membership status.	ALEC / DENR	ASAP
6	Implement EOI process to identify a new Chair. ASWAC members to promote through their networks.	DENR / ASWAC	ASAP

RESOLUTIONS

(Raised by Alex Read, unanimously supported). ASWAC advises DENR that demand management remains a high priority. ASWAC considers ongoing efforts to reduce water demand as necessary for long term sustainability of Alice Springs water resources.

(Raised by Robbie Henderson, unanimously supported). Jocelyn Davies was thanked for her efforts and valuable contribution to ASWAC in her capacity as Chair since January 2017. The committee wished her all the best for her upcoming work in Vietnam.

2. Introduction

Jocelyn Davies (Chair) welcomed attendees, introduced the meeting and confirmed the agenda. Declaration of any conflicts of interest re matters on agenda were sought: none raised.

The minutes and workshop report from Meeting #5 were confirmed (raised by Adam, confirmed by Peter).

3. Review outcomes of the demand management workshop and formulate recommendations

Robbie presented a recap about the information shared and the main 'take home' messages from the demand management workshop (meeting #5) held on 29th May 2018. This included a brief summary of drivers of water use:

Driver	Notes
Peak day demand	At this time existing infrastructure can provide for peak day demand with some spare capacity - currently not a strong driver.
Infrastructure costs (new public water supply bores)	Important, however new bores not required for at least 10 years. Deferring establishment of a new bore field at Rocky Hill is still important. Ongoing Mereenie water assessment work will assist to formulate an estimate about when a new bore field is needed
Production costs	Not a driver because marginal costs of production per KL are less than the price consumers pay per KL. As many of PWC costs are fixed it is financially beneficial to supply more water
Energy and climate	An important issue because supply of potable water is energy and emissions intensive. Supply of 1 ML of water causes production of approximately 600 kg of CO ₂ emissions. PWC are installing a solar PV system at the bore field which will theoretically offset a portion of water supply emissions.
Population	Growth has been very slow, rapid growth thought to be unlikely. Not a strong driver at this time
Social drivers	Costs of water to consumers / high cost of living is a significant driver for helping people to reduce demand (and bills)
Sustainability of the resource	The water resource is finite and is being gradually depleted overtime. Continues to be a significant driver.

The 'systems map' (cause and effect diagram) was tabled showing the relationships between various factors that influence the volume of water that is used from the Amadeus aquifers in the Alice Springs water control district.

Lessons learned from previous demand management programs (e.g. Alice Water Smart) was briefly discussed including the conclusions that demand management outcomes can be delivered through a) focus on big users / customers (e.g. public housing), targeting leaks and irrigation, and through appropriate use of smart meter technology.

Adam Davis (PWC) reported that Power and Water's key performance indicators (KPIs) for customer water use (demand) in Alice Springs are to maintain at a constant rate for the next few years (There is no active program in Alice to try and reduce customer demand). PWC have performance indicators within their Water Services Business Unit Plan that is reviewed annually. Robbie reported that DENR currently do not have focus on demand management, budget or resources dedicated to demand management in Alice Springs.

Following the recap of information and discussion, Jocelyn Davies led a participatory session to formulate recommendations regarding if or how DENR should be engaged in demand management activities for DENR to consider or raise with other agencies. ASWAC members worked in two groups, and identified the following recommendations:

"What needs to be done:"

1. When resourcing demand management activities, Government (DENR / Treasury) should recognise the potential conflict that exists between Power & Water's interests in saving water and its business model (interests in selling water).
2. Protect and ensure sustainability of the resource:
 - DENR should identify key performance indicators for water demand, and implement these through regulation. For example, licence conditions that set a limit to Power and Water consumption (like the previous 'cap')
 - DENR should adopt a target for Power and Water customer water demand, and examine how to best achieve it (employ best practice demand management approaches)
 - Power and Water should also have KPIs for demand management
3. Implement a 'quiet' (low profile) strategic demand management program, using approaches proven to be effective (target large users, irrigation and leaks, and use of smart meter technology).
4. Invest in ongoing public awareness about water issues, including promotion of water efficiency principles for householders and businesses.
5. DENR should review the draft 'Use it or lose it' (unused water policy), to ensure it does not have a perverse outcome of incentivising inefficient water use
6. Consider 'incremental allocation' as a responsive method that could avoid the need to apply the 'use it or lose it' policy.
7. Power and Water's water extraction licence conditions should include a target for non-revenue water (infrastructure leakage index) to drive ongoing good performance.
8. DENR should liaise with Power and Water to remove barriers and create an easy pathway for customers to access smart meter technology. This could include information, access to installers, and modelling of cost savings.
9. DENR should investigate overcoming barriers to recycled water use in conjunction with the Department of Health, to enable source substitution and conservation of high quality water resources from Amadeus aquifers.

Resolution:

(Raised by Alex Read, unanimously supported). "ASWAC advises DENR that demand management remains a high priority. ASWAC considers ongoing efforts to reduce water demand as necessary for long term sustainability of Alice Springs water resources."

Actions:

ASWAC to prepare a Memorandum to the Executive Director, Water resources to provide recommendations for DENR involvement in demand management activities within the Alice Springs water control district. Robbie Henderson to provide executive support in preparing the memorandum.

PWC to provide update on schools program and smart metering.

4. Review and update of RoadMAP to desertSMART Town, opportunities for involvement

Alex Read (ALEC) provided a brief overview and history of the RoadMAP to a DesertSMART town, and announced that ALEC are commencing development of the 3rd iteration of the plan. The RoadMAP includes a section on sustainable water management, and includes targets established through a process of engagement with the Alice Springs community and government stakeholders. Jocelyn Davies (Chair) commented that many targets identified in previous plans had been achieved. ASWAC members agreed to be involved in the process to review the current RoadMAP and to receive a survey about progress on water actions. ASWAC members are encouraged to spread the word about the new RoadMAP and get involved.

Action: Alex to email the *RoadMAP to a DesertSMART Town* review survey to ASWAC members

5. Terms of reference for the review of the Alice Springs Water Allocation Plan

The purpose of the session was to introduce ASWAC members to the objectives and scope of the review of the Alice Springs Water Allocation Plan (ASWAP):

- According to the Water Act, a WAP has a maximum life of ten years and must be reviewed within intervals no longer than five years.
- ASWAP review must be completed before January 2021
- WACs have an important role in the review process
- The end product is not a 'review' but an updated WAP that has been reviewed

The ASWAC TOR includes to "actively and openly participate in monitoring and evaluating the water allocation plan for the Alice Springs Water Control District and in the review of the plan."

Robbie Henderson (DENR) presented a general overview of the ASWAP review process:

Problem definition:	Define the scope of the review – TOR <i>What aspects of the current WAP do you like? What areas can be improved?</i>
Information:	Gather (or produce) the data and information required to inform the review (relevant to the scope) - Water resource assessment report - Licence / usage report - Other reports or data?
Review and develop content:	Revised WAP drafted in consultation with WAC Implement consultation plan Ensure compliance with the Water Act and Department policy
Decision:	Reviewed WAP declared when approved by the Minister

Members discussed some of the information that may feed into the WAP review process. The highest priority information product is the updated Mereenie aquifer system model (currently underway).

6. Update on Water Act reform and the broader water reform agenda

The purpose of this session was to provide a brief and general overview and update about the various water reform activities underway. Robbie Henderson (DENR) presented and discussed the water reform items in the following table:

Item	General scope	Status
Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2018	Removal of mining and petroleum exemptions and update offences and penalty sections of the Act (except waste water disposal and pollution)	Awaiting a report from the Economic Policy And Review Committee before the second reading in Parliament hopefully before the end of the year
Water Amendment (hydraulic fracturing) Bill	Recommendations from the Fracking enquiry where the Water Act intersects with petroleum legislation	First draft prepared, hopefully introduced in 2018 (pending scheduling by parliament)
Water Amendment (minor amendment) Bill	Minor amendments to parts of the Act that are 'unwieldy' or result in unintended administrative issues	Hopefully introduced in 2018 (pending scheduling by parliament)
Water Amendment (Strategic Aboriginal Water Reserves) Bill	Amendments to establish SAWR as a beneficial use and require their inclusion in water allocation plans	Hopefully introduced in 2018 (pending scheduling by parliament)
Directions paper on water reform	Broad discussion paper about the scope of future water reforms, including legislation and policy. Seeks community input into the scope of reform – i.e. assists to set the agenda.	To be launched at 'Water in the Bush' conference in Darwin this Friday To be made available for consultation through 'Have your say' website from Friday 19 th October 2018 – 31 st March 2019.

Question taken on notice: How do the relevant Bills apply to the exploration stage of mining or petroleum activities?

Actions / decisions:

Answer question taken on notice regarding water amendment Bills and their application to mining or petroleum exploration. Answer to be emailed to ASWAC members.

7. ASWAC membership – Chair resignation and replacement

Jocelyn Davies announced her resignation as Chair, taking effect from the conclusion of the meeting. The Minister and Department have been informed.

The process of finding a new Chair was discussed. There will be a call for Expression of Interest (EOIs) including advertisement, and direct approaches to potential candidates. WAC members will be encouraged to promote the opportunity through their networks, and are also encouraged to apply. The Chair position is appointed by the Minister.

Alex Read informed the committee that ALEC intends to nominate himself as the primary member of the WAC, as a replacement for Jimmy Cocking whom would become the proxy.

Actions:

ALEC to write to the Department seeking to change Alex and Jimmy's membership status.

DENR to implement EOI process to identify a new Chair. ASWAC members to assist in promoting the opportunity through their networks.

Resolution:

(Raised by Robbie Henderson, unanimously supported). Jocelyn Davies was thanked for her efforts and valuable contribution to ASWAC in her capacity as Chair since January 2017. The committee wished her all the best for her upcoming work in Vietnam.

6. CLOSING MATTERS

The Chair led a discussion about the forward agenda. It was agreed that it would focus on the review of the water allocation plan, and that information (e.g. discussion papers or sections of the plan) would be sent to the Committee out of session (prior to the next meeting).

6. NEXT MEETING

Proposed for late February or early March 2019, no date set

Meeting closed at 7.10 pm