

## Howard Water Advisory Committee

### Minutes for Meeting 14: 1-4pm Tuesday, 14th May 2018 Level 1 Conference room, Goyder Centre

#### 1. Welcome and apologies

Present: David George (Chair), Trevor Durling, Jan Hintze, Kate Peake, Dave Liddle, Bill Risk (left 3pm), Gerry Wood, Mardi Miles (DENR), Tim Bond (DENR), Liza Schenkel (DENR), Jo Townsend (DENR arrived 2pm)

Apologies: Mathew Salter, Donna Jackson, Mark Smith, David Ciaravolo, Maree Bredhauer.

#### 2. Notes from the previous meeting

Minutes for previous meeting accepted. All minutes are posted on the web when approved by the committee. Minutes for meeting 11 still to be circulated and approved by committee.

#### 3. HWAC communications

- The moratorium on fracking has been lifted for certain areas of the Northern Territory. There will be some work required by the Department through the 135 adopted recommendations. Work is already underway to repeal Sec 7 of the Water Act which exempts the licensing of water use by mining and petroleum activities.
- The Department met with the Solicitor for the Northern Territory last week to discuss management of stock and domestic water use. Further options for management need to be explored.
- The Department advised that the NT water allocation planning framework (80/20 rule) is not fixed; it is a starting point, and can be amended. The Darwin Rural water licensing policy allows for this in areas of existing users.

The following issues were raised by committee members:

- Strategic aboriginal water reserve needs to be in the Plan, with recognition of use and ownership of land and water. The Reserve should not be considered as being “locked up”, and could be considered as valuable for other beneficial uses, such as environmental water requirements. The process for determining the size of the Reserve is covered by existing policy.
- A public education program, aimed at water conservation, is required as soon as possible including;
  - Current water predictions
  - Forecast for following year
  - Key messaging that water is a finite resource
  - Voluntary/community water use rules – noting that Katherine has seen a 20% drop in public water supply demand under voluntary restrictions
  - Incentives for water conservation, such as tap timers
  - Target community education at events such as Freds Pass show.

#### **4. Objectives of the plan**

The draft objectives of the plan were revisited with a need to revise the objectives in line with measures that can be undertaken within the plan. The following issues were raised:

- Short term and long term strategies required – for either the review period or life of the plan
- Management of unregulated water use – what options are available to manage stock and domestic water use?
- Engagement/education program appears to be the most beneficial option available to the plan, and how can this be undertaken, but it must result in behavioural change.
- Data collection is also an important element of the plan
- Further direction required from the Department regarding the function of the plan.

#### **Next steps**

- Department to rework the Plan objectives to reflect the management options available
- Provide greater detail on the strategies required to meet Plan objectives.

#### **Actions:**

- Committee to write to the Department CEO requesting direction of committee/plan and implementation of an education and community engagement strategy.
- Provide Darwin Rural water licensing policy if available.
- Organise hydrogeological information refresher to interested committee members.

#### **5. Next Meeting**

1-4pm Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May