

## Howard Water Advisory Committee

### Minutes for Meeting 12: Tuesday, 6th March 2018 Level 1 Conference room, Goyder Centre

#### 1. Welcome and apologies

Present: David George (Chair), David Ciaravolo, Shane Papworth, Trevor Durling, Dave Liddle, Jan Hintze, Kate Peake, Gerry Wood, Mark Smith, Maree Bredhauer (arrived late), Mardi Miles (DENR), Simon Cruickshank (DENR), Noaf Delos Santos (DENR)

Apologies: Mathew Salter, Donna Jackson, Bill Risk.

#### 2. Notes from the previous meeting

All minutes are posted on the web when approved by the committee.

Minutes for previous meeting to be provided, notes to be used for internal committee communication.

#### 3. HWAC communications

- Discussed the two aspects which are the Committee Communications and Water Allocation Plan Communications.
- Simon Cruickshank provided details about the new Director of Planning and Engagement, Tim Bond whose focus is on the improvement of the Water Allocation planning process.
- Additional funding has been received for staff to reduce the backlog of water extraction licences in the Darwin Rural area.
- Further recommendations for effective HWAC communication tools.
- The Groundwater Watch road signage has been improved so that it is more relevant to the location of the signage, and where people actually live.

#### 4. Role of the Committee and other issues

- The Chair and Department discussed the role of the Committee under the Water Act and the Committee's Terms of Reference.
- Water Allocation Plans are developed and implemented under Section 22B of the Water Act.
- Water advisory committees are in place under Section 23 of the Act, but there is little guidance in the Act as to the role of the Committee during the development of a Water Allocation Plan. Section 23 describes the committee's responsibilities once a Water Allocation Plan is in place.
- The Department discussed the framework of the 80/20 rule and balancing issues and how to apply it. Objectives and strategies to meet this framework are required.
- The Committee discussed the issue regarding how to deal with an overallocated resource and reviewed the relevant sections of the *Water Act*, which describes how water must be allocated within the sustainable resource (Sec 22B).
- The Productivity Commission completed a review of national water reform in December. The NT's progress against the NWI will be included.

- The Committee sought clarification on the objectives and ownership of the Plan.
  - The need for a Plan to be equitable and achievable and acknowledge the challenges of allocating the resource.
  - The Committee discussed issues with the draft Plan and provide recommendations to the Controller.
  - Committee members are not obliged to “sign off” on a Water Allocation Plan.
  - Committee members are representatives of the stakeholders and the community.
  
- The Committee discussed some of the challenges faced with developing a Plan:
  - Managing existing groundwater extraction licences (eg following the 2016 removal of the 15 L/s exemption)
  - Addressing over allocation risks (eg when the majority of extractors are unlicensed)
  - Impact on water planning for adjacent aquifer resources in the Darwin Rural Area (eg if setting specific allocation targets for the Howard system)
  - Managing current development applications.

**Action:**

- Committee to revisit Plan objectives and risk assessments
  - To determine and test the risk in order to adjust the objectives
  - Adjust strategies accordingly.
- Department to send the meeting presentation to the advisory committee.
- Committee to seek clarification from the Controller/Minister on the role and expectations of the Committee.

**5. Next Meeting**

Date to be confirmed, approximately four weeks’ time, to be confirmed.