

# Rapid Creek Water Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 22 March 2023  
**Time:** 2:00pm – 4:00pm  
**Chair:** Nick Fewster, City of Darwin

**Location:** Bidjpidji Meeting Room, Civic Centre,  
City of Darwin, Harry Chan Avenue  
**Secretariat:** Carmony Leso, Executive Officer –  
Committees (DEPWS)

**Attendees:** Jonathon Burcher – *Proxy*  
Katina Croft – *Guest*  
Louise Kean – *Proxy*  
Morgan Richard  
Neal Adamson  
Peter O’Hagan – *Proxy*  
Timothy Moore

Water Resources Division  
Department of Defence  
Parks and Wildlife Division  
City of Darwin  
Department of Defence  
Rapid Creek Landcare Group  
Community Representative

**Apologies** Dean McAdam  
Karen Gibb  
Lisa Peters

Parks and Wildlife, DEPWS  
Charles Darwin University  
Rapid Creek Landcare Group

No.	Item	Action (e.g. Noting / Discussion / Decision)
	<b>Meeting opened</b>	The Rapid Creek Water Advisory Committee (RCWAC) meeting opened at 2:00pm.
1	<b>Welcome attendance and apologies</b>	Chairperson, Nick Fewster, opened the meeting and welcomed the members to the 21 <sup>st</sup> meeting. Apologies were noted from Dean McAdam, Karen Gibb and Lisa Peters.
2	<b>Conflicts of Interest</b>	No conflicts declared.
3	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b>	The minutes of the previous meeting on 21 November 2022 were circulated to the Committee members prior to the meeting for comments / edits. The minutes were accepted with no further changes.
4	<b>Actions arising from the previous meeting</b>	
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Action Officer</b> <b>Status / Update</b>
	<b>Land Rezoning</b> Letters were drafted to City of Darwin (CoD) and the Northern Territory Government (NTG) requesting transfer of the land and send RCWAC members for their approval. The request is being considered by CoD.	City of Darwin <b>In progress</b> Nick reported that CoD are supportive of having the land transferred over to them. CoD are liaising with DIPL on the transfer.
	<b>Gross Pollutant Traps</b> CoD advised that there were thirteen with limited data	City of Darwin <b>In progress</b> An assessment of gross pollutant traps has occurred

			across CoD areas within the catchment. This information to support RCWAC discussions on potential future locations and their relevant land tenure
	Ask DIPL for further information about the large stormwater pipes going into Boulter Road and what the implications are for catchment flows.	Nick Fewster	<b>In progress</b> Discuss with DIPL rep at next meeting
	Provide information on how current and future developments are managing potential increases in stormwater at RAAF Darwin	Neal Adamson	<b>Complete</b> Update at item 8.4
	Raise the issue of air quality with the Director of Environmental Health and see if they will present to the committee.	Karen Gibb	<b>In progress</b> Suggestion to have this presentation at the meeting that Minister Moss attends.
	Collate the priorities for the Healthy Rivers Program and provide them to Luke Gosling	Nick Fewster	<b>Complete</b>
	Management issues on DIPL land to be discussed with DIPL at next meeting, including the patch of natural bush on the detention basin in Rapid Creek that needs maintenance.	Nick Fewster	<b>In progress</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>		
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Correspondence out</b>	<p>The following incoming correspondence was tabled at the meeting for noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communique to the Minister <i>Discussion: Nick advised that the committee will put the process for getting community values for the Darwin Harbour Integrated Report Card on the agenda for the next meeting,</i></li> <li>• RCWAC letter to Luke Gosling</li> </ul>	
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Correspondence in</b>	<p>The following outgoing correspondence was tabled at the meeting for noting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email about dumped cars in Rapid Creek <i>Discussion: Louise advised that Parks and Wildlife received a report in relation to this in December and that they contacted the EPA who advised that it isn't a concern. No one contracted to remove vehicles in the creek. The cars have been there for a number of years which may result in a disturbance to the ecosystem should they be removed. Louise will review the current situation with the view that the vehicle in the creek does not reflect the natural values of the creek and report to the committee.</i></li> <li>• Email from the Weeds Branch about Gamba Grass in Rapid Creek</li> </ul>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Air Quality Issues in Rapid Creek Catchment</b>	Postpone to the next meeting.	

7	Rapid Creek Plan of Management	Nil discussion.
8	<b>Member Reports on activities</b>	
8.1	Rapid Creek Landcare Group (RCLCG)	<p>Peter circulated a letter to the RCWAC from the Rapid Creek Land Care Group (RCLCG) raising their concerns around issues in Rapid Creek</p> <p>Peter reported that the RCLCG are still concerned about the Marrara Detention Basin as there are no Gross Pollutant Traps where litter items and debris flow into the creek.</p> <p>The RCLCG has been sending emails to the City of Darwin in order to get things actioned such as weed spraying, Caltrop, and the maintenance of bush land. One issue that hasn't been resolved is the overgrowth of coffee bush, weeds etc. on the eastern side of the mangrove verge (which runs from Trower Road up to CDU) on the Alawa side behind the community garden.</p> <p><i>Discussion: Louise advised that the patch has been an ongoing issue. There has been ongoing discussions with CDU about land swaps and land rearrangements. Louise advised that if there is a funding opportunity Parks can look into getting it cleaned up.</i></p> <p><i>Morgan requested for the email about this to be send to him and he will try and get it actioned.</i></p> <p><b>Action: Peter to email Morgan about the overgrown patch on the eastern side of the mangrove verge</b></p>
8.2	Parks and Wildlife (PW)	<p>Louise reported that PW are currently in their weed season and are moving into their fire season. Annual weed and fire plans have been submitted for approval for the year. There are multiple crews working across Casuarina Costal Reserve on Gamba Grass and Mission Grass management. There are spray contractors operating around Casuarina and Holmes Jungle.</p>
8.3	City of Darwin (CoD)	<p>Nick reported that for 2023 he would like to see the Community Values Survey happen, and get an idea about what information the RCWAC needs to provide back to the community. Nick would also like to see more commitment from Minsters in terms of Fire Management i.e. policies, alignment across departments, and having a vision for a no fire policy for nominated areas for key biodiversity hot spots.</p> <p>Nick reported that the CoD General Grounds Division are more focused on lawns and general garden care in parks. Then there is a specialist bush crew who manage biodiversity areas .</p> <p>CoD are working with CDU on their urban bird migration study. Nick will provide updates as they become available.</p>
8.4	Department of Defence (DoD)	<p>Neal Adamson reported to the Committee about how current and future developments are managing potential increases in stormwater at RAAF Darwin. Neal advised that there is minimal development happening within the Rapid Creek catchment area. Most of the development is happening in the Ludmilla catchment area. There has been a fuel farm development recently and an extension to the run way, which has being managed with retention basins. A retention basin retains water which dissipates through evaporation or seeps into the ground.</p>

		<p>There is a new Marine Helicopter Development proposed which has had extensive flood modelling. They are only at the 35% design phase. More information will be provided at the 60% design phase.</p> <p>Fire management is in the planning phase at the moment. The fire management work scheduled has just been completed with the contractor. The weed program is in its second round of spraying. The third and final round will occur in April. RAAF has also been coordinating with the Grounds Management Program which focuses on the areas that are slashed.</p> <p>Neal advised that he will be resigning from the RCWAC. Katina Croft will be taking over for him.</p> <p>Katina reported that the Integrated Vegetation Management is on round 2 for the year which is in the Airport Development Group (ADG) and DoD joint user area. It was delayed due to the rain.</p> <p>Katina reported that the stormwater drain management has been a priority. Some of the drains have been cleaned and hopefully there won't be an increase in sediment in Rapid Creek, but it is being monitored.</p> <p><i>Discussion: Nick asked if there a policy statement that exists within DoD that talks about stormwater and net increases in flows in developments.</i></p> <p><i>Tim commented that it would also be good to continue to pursue this and ensure DOD, DIA and the like, commit to what is being asked by the RCWAC in terms of stormwater management and net increases in flows in developments.</i></p> <p><b>Action: Neal advised that he will look into it and report back.</b></p>
8.5	Water Resources Division (WRD)	<p>Jonathon reported that WRD have been putting together a monitoring program for the Rapid Creek catchment. This is in partnership with EnviroDNA, but are looking at partnering with CDU as well. There will be 80 species that will be able to be detected if they are in Rapid Creek. Sampling will be monthly, commencing in May and continuing for 12 months. The monitoring site is yet to be decided. Other water quality parameters will also be monitored. The EnviroDNA samples can be stored for a period of time and can be reused as needed.</p> <p><i>Discussion: Peter noted that there is a lot of data in the City of Darwin Biodiversity Assessment Report that could be useful. Nick advised that he will share the report with Jonathon when it has been finalised as it could be helpful with their site selection. Nick noted that Airport Development Group also conducts Biodiversity Surveys in the catchment. Nick suggested all relevant members provide their biodiversity studies to Jonathan.</i></p> <p><b>Action: Relevant RCWAC members to provide their biodiversity studies from Rapid Creek to Jonathon Burcher</b></p>
8.6	Community update	<p>Tim reported that he continues to work through the Airport Master Plan and continues to liaise with Defence around zero net increases to stormwater flows and processes.</p> <p>Tim reported that the bridge at Rapid Creek was closed by the Council without a plan to replace it. Morgan advised that there will be a permanent solution in the future and in future, better community consultation will be undertaken.</p>
9	Other Business	<p>Tim reported that the class action on PFAS is likely to go to trial in May.</p>

10	Next meeting	The next meeting will be held in June 2023.
	Meeting closed	The meeting concluded at 3:50pm

## Actions arising from the meeting

No.	Action	Action officer	Timeframe
1	Email Morgan about the overgrown patch on the eastern side of the mangrove verge	Peter O'Hagan	May
2	Provide the biodiversity studies from Rapid Creek to Jonathon Burcher	RCWAC members	As available
3	Provide an update on the ability to remove the vehicle from Rapid Creek	PW, Louise Kean	Next meeting
4	Provide an update on any Defence policies that relate to / support no net increase in environmental flows from developments.	DoD	Next meeting

## Appendix A – Weed and Fire Management Plans

*Some clarification on reports received is required*

Plan	Organisation	Date created	Due for review
Charles Darwin University	Weed Plan	2021	2026
	Fire Plan	2021	2026
City of Darwin	Weed Plan	2023	-
	Fire Plan	2023	-
Darwin Airport Development Group	Weed Plan	2021	2023
	Fire Plan	2021	2023
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics	Weed Plan	June 2020	June 2025
	Fire Plan	-	-
Department of Defence	Weed Plan	2021	2022
	Fire Plan	2022	2024
Parks and Wildlife	Weed Plan	2020	2022
	Fire Plan	2021	?