

Rapid Creek Water Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date:	13 July 2023	Location:	Sturt Plateau Room, Ground Floor, Goyder Centre, 25 Chun Wah Terrace, Palmerston
Time:	8:30am – 10:30am	Secretariat:	Carmony Leso, Executive Officer – Committees (DEPWS)
Chair:	Nick Fewster, City of Darwin		
Attendees:	Dean McAdam Jonathon Burcher – <i>Proxy</i> Karen Gibb Katina Croft Peter O’Hagan – <i>Proxy</i>		Parks and Wildlife Division Water Resources Division Charles Darwin University Department of Defence Rapid Creek Landcare Group
Guests:	Claire Punch Fay Johnston Penelope Jones – <i>Teams</i> Sharon Campbell		Minister Moss’s Office University of Tasmania University of Tasmania University of Tasmania
Apologies	Lisa Peters Morgan Rickard Steven Dawson		Rapid Creek Landcare Group City of Darwin Larrakia

No.	Item	Action (e.g. Noting / Discussion / Decision)
	Meeting opened	The Rapid Creek Water Advisory Committee (RCWAC) meeting opened at 8:30am.
1	Welcome attendance and apologies	Chairperson, Nick Fewster, opened the meeting and welcomed the members to the 22 nd meeting. Apologies were noted from Lisa Peters and Morgan Rickard
2	Conflicts of Interest	No conflicts declared.
3	Bushfire and Smoke Health Impacts Across Greater Darwin	Penelope Jones, Faye Johnston and Sharon Campbell from the University of Tasmania attended the meeting to discuss the findings from the case study - ‘ <i>Smoke pollution must be part of the Savanna Fire Management Equation: A case study from Darwin, Australia</i> ’. The study looked at: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual and seasonal trends in PM2.5 Pollution in Darwin from 2003 – 2019• Annual and seasonal trends in fire activity within a 500km radius of Darwin• The key drivers of PM2.5 Pollution on a daily basis• The key drivers of PM2.5 pollution on an annual and seasonal basis Penelope reported that since 2003 Darwin’s pollution seems to have worsened in the early dry season and possibly worsened overall. The air

		<p>pollution patterns are closely linked to fire activity trends. More detailed works needs to be undertaken to ascribe the precise source/s of Darwin's smoke. There is community concern that air pollution levels will continue to increase.</p> <p>A copy of the presentation will be sent to all Committee members.</p>	
4	Discussion with the Ministers Office	<p>Emily Rutherford, Engagement and Communication Advisor to Minister Moss attended the meeting to discuss any concerns or feedback the Committee has.</p> <p>Fire and Weed Management</p> <p>Nick advised that the Rapid Creek Plan of Management guides the Committee. One of the biggest priorities for the Committee is effective fire and weed management within the catchment. The Committee often looks at ways that they can better work across landholdings and with other members to improve fire and weed management. Climate change and arson are also significant impacts that devastate key biodiversity areas within the catchment.</p> <p>The Committee has engaged with NTFRS, where there is good intention there but limited policy / procedure / coordination / follow through in managing fires to protect key biodiversity areas. The Committee recognises that there are some key pockets in the catchment of high value that they want to protect and keep fire out of. The Committee has determined that a good approach for this is to identify areas of high environmental value and zone as priority fire management zones where the objective is to have no wildfire. This doesn't mean no fires period, but if a fire does occur in the specific area that is outside of the planned burns that it is treated like a fire on a property and gets an immediate response. This would require NTFRS to have a Biodiversity Policy to apply to the the Rapid Creek Catchment, as well as procedures which allow them to respond immediately to fires in the priority fire management zones in Rapid Creek. Other partners including NT Parks and the Larrakia Rangers could support in fire management where there was formalised partnership agreements.</p> <p>Nick advised that Gamba Grass within the catchment is also an issue. There is good work already undertaken within the catchment by the Gamba Army and Adopt a spot, however the zoning of Gamba Grass in the catchment compromised these efforts as there is no requirement for eradication.</p> <p><i>Discussion: Emily advised that there is work going on around Urban Rivers Program to see how it is going to be rolled out. There should be an outcome soon. Emily also advised that she appreciated potential areas of policy improvement and would respond back to the committee on these items.</i></p>	
5	Minutes of the previous meeting	<p>The minutes of the previous meeting on 21 November 2022 were circulated to the Committee members prior to the meeting for comments / edits.</p> <p>The minutes were accepted with no further changes.</p>	
6	Actions arising from the previous meetings		
	Action	Action Officer	Status / Update
	<p>Land Rezoning Letters were drafted to City of Darwin (CoD) and the Northern Territory Government</p>	Nick Fewster	In progress

	(NTG) requesting transfer of the land and send RCWAC members for their approval. The request is being considered by CoD.		City of Darwin is still working with DIPL to acquire the parcel of land
	Gross Pollutant Traps CoD advised that there were thirteen with limited data	Nick Fewster	In progress Has been added as a priority for the Urban Rivers Program.
	Ask DIPL for further information about the large stormwater pipes going into Boulter Road and what the implications are for catchment flows.	Nick Fewster	In progress Discuss with DIPL rep at next meeting.
	Raise the issue of air quality with the Director of Environmental Health and see if they will present to the committee.	Karen Gibb	Complete Refer to agenda item 3.
	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	In progress Discuss with DIPL rep at next meeting.
	Email Morgan about the overgrown patch on the eastern side of the mangrove verge.	Peter O'Hagan	Complete
	Provide the biodiversity studies from Rapid Creek to Jonathon Burcher.	RCWAC members	Complete
	Provide an update on the ability to remove the vehicle from Rapid Creek.	PW, Louise Kean	Complete The vehicle will remain in the creek. It is not viable to move it at this time.
	Provide an update on any Defence policies that relate to / support no net increase in environmental flows from developments.	DoD, Katina Croft	In progress Katina will provide more information at the next meeting.
7	Correspondence		
7.1	Correspondence out	<p>The following outgoing correspondence was tabled at the meeting for noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Water Ways Project Gamba in Rapid Creek Catchment Pollution in Rapid Creek <p><i>Discussion: The photos have been sent to the NTEPA. CoD will send a communication to the Rapid Creek Markets about what is being put in the drain, it will also be CC'd to the NTEPA.</i></p> <p><i>Action: Nick to contact the Rapid Creek Markets about the Pollution in the Rapid Creek Drain from the Markets.</i></p>	
8	Rapid Creek Plan of Management	No discussion held.	
9	Member Reports on activities		

9.1	Rapid Creek Landcare Group (RCLCG)	<p>Peter reported that the Rapid Creek Land Care group have raised some issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been some land clearing along a bike path near CDU. This has been raised this with Parks and Wildlife already. <p><i>Discussion: Dean advised that there is a lot of movement happening around land boundaries and land administration at Casuarina Coastal Reserve. Parks are trying to get it to a state where they can declare the reserve as a Park. The area in question will be included as part of that and it might be given to CDU.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCLCG have raised the issue of discharging fluorescein into drains with CDU. There has been a reoccurrence of the issue. The RCWAC suggested following up with the EPA. • The carparks at Marrara Sport Ground are full of litter. This has been raised with the sports department and the precinct manager has advised that they are onto it. • The Gurumbai Trail is being upgraded by Airport Development Group (ADG). ADG are liaising across tenures about the upgrade. Katina reported that DoD has agreed to the planned maintenance to make it safe but they have also asked for a formal licensing agreement in case anyone is injured during walking tours.
9.2	Parks and Wildlife (PW)	<p>Dean reported that the Parks fire season is complete. Parks are working towards getting Casuarina Coastal Reserve declared as a Park to give it more weight and protection.</p>
9.3	City of Darwin (CoD)	<p>Nick reported that CoD have allocated more sensors for the Bird Biodiversity Project along Rapid Creek and that CoD have reviewed the Gurumbai Trail and managing the upgrade on City of Darwin land as a permit where there is a focus on tree protection.</p>
9.4	Department of Defence (DoD)	<p>Katina reported that Bushfire Management for early dry season has been completed and they are commencing planning for next year's program.</p> <p>DoD are just reaching 60% design for projects that are happening in the catchment. Katina will be able to provide more of an update at the next meeting.</p> <p>The integrated vegetation management program has been approved for an expansion.</p>
9.5	Water Resources Division (WRD)	<p>Jonathan reported that they are waiting on results from the eDNA project. Results will be made available to the Committee when they become available. The water quality results are consistent with their expectations.</p> <p>Jonathan reported that there have been some challenges around the Community Values survey for Rapid Creek. He has engaged with his Community Engagement Team about how it should be done as there is a wider framework that is being developed around that.</p> <p><i>Discussion: Nick suggested that someone attend the next RCWAC meeting to discuss Rapid Creek's values and get feedback from RCWAC members about what their priorities are.</i></p>

		<i>The RCWAC agreed to have this as an agenda item for the next meeting so the committee can determine the values for Rapid Creek, which they can share with the DHIRC Working Group.</i> Action: Have Rapid Creek's Values as a topic on the Agenda for discussion at the next meeting.
10	Other Business	Nil.
11	Next meeting	The next meeting will be held on 29 September 2023
	Meeting closed	The meeting concluded at 10:30am

Actions arising from the meeting

No.	Action	Action officer	Timeframe
1	Contact the Rapid Creek Markets about the Pollution in the Rapid Creek Drain from the Markets.	Nick Fewster	Prior to the next meeting
2	Put Rapid Creek's Values as a topic on the Agenda for discussion at the next meeting.	Carmony Leso	For the 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	?