

Rapid Creek Water Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: 26 February 2024
Time: 9:00am – 11:00am
Chair: Nick Fewster, City of Darwin

Location: Finke Meeting Room, 4th Floor, Goyder Centre, 25 Chun Wah Terrace, Palmerston
Secretariat: Parul Chandel, A/Executive Officer Committees, DEPWS

Attendees: Louise Kean Proxy for Dean
Jonathon Burcher
Katina Croft – Teams
Peter O'Hagan Proxy for Lisa
Dylan Irvine Proxy for Nicola
Wendy Pengelly proxy for Racheal
Timothy Moore - Teams
Julie Whiting

Parks and Wildlife Division
Water Resources Division
Department of Defence (DoD)
Rapid Creek Landcare Group (RCLCG)
Charles Darwin University (CDU)
Crown Land, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL)
Community member
Airport Development Group (ADG)

Apologies: Morgan Rickard
Steven Dawson

City of Darwin (CoD)
Larrakia Nation

Observers: Jessica Huxley with Jonathan
Water Resources Division

No.	Item	Action (e.g. Noting / Discussion / Decision)
	Meeting opened	The Rapid Creek Water Advisory Committee (RCWAC) meeting opened at 9:01 am.
1	Welcome attendance and apologies	Chairperson, Nick Fewster, opened the meeting and welcomed the members to the 25 th meeting. He provided an Acknowledgement of Country. He gave a quick overview of the Committee for the benefit of new members. Apologies were noted from Morgan Rickard, and Steven Dawson.
2	Conflicts of Interest	No conflicts declared.
3	Minutes of the previous meeting	The minutes of the previous meeting on 7 December 2023 were circulated to the Committee members prior to the meeting for comments / edits. The minutes were accepted with minor administrative changes.

4 Actions arising from the previous meetings			
Action	Action Officer	Status / Update	
<p>Land Rezoning Small parcel of land to the north-east of Henry Wrigley Bridge.</p>	Nick Fewster	<p>In progress City of Darwin is working with DIPL to acquire the parcel of land.</p>	
<p>Gross Pollutant Traps Assess additional gross pollutant traps for the catchment</p>	Nick Fewster	<p>In progress The Committee discussed the Urban Rivers Program as a priority item. After exploring options, the team decided against submitting a grant application for a gross pollutants trap as no suitable sites were found. Peter suggested smaller traps could be effective, while Louise proposed a boom to trap debris. Nick suggested an opportunity upstream of Marrara that could be organized by DIPL and Tim emphasized the need for an assessment first. The group identified further assessment and data collection as next steps.</p> <p>Action: Nick will share assessment information undertaken by City of Darwin.</p>	
<p>NTG Contractor weed control Key land areas under the contract with prolific weed growth.</p>	Wendy Pengelly	<p>In progress Wendy provided an update that the weed and drain contractor has completed their work. The contractor noted that the adjacent allotment is overgrown with weeds and DIPL is addressing the issue. Boulter Road was assigned to Gamba Army for spraying but the job remains incomplete due to high water levels; this work will need to be postponed until conditions improve.</p> <p>Action: DIPL to provide an update on weed status.</p>	
<p>Stormwater management Policy Provide update on any Defence policies that relate to / support no net increase in environmental flows from developments.</p>	Katina Croft	<p>In progress Katina advised that DoD Policies are Australia wide and the policy states that DoD are to look at the impact of flows, it doesn't say they can't be increased. However, the unofficial Policy in Darwin is to aim for no increase in flows. The projects are planning retention basins and GPTs on the areas that require them. The aim is to retain the water for 4 hours after</p>	

			<p>peak flows. Katina will provide a further update at the next meeting.</p> <p>Katina asked Nick to clarify exactly what information he required. Nick asked for the local instruction to commit to no net increases in stormwater flows post Rapid Creek catchment developments to align with the Rapid Creek Plan of Management objectives</p>
5	<p>Urban Rivers and Catchments Program, rollout status and priority projects.</p>	<p>Peter provided an update on this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project manager role is being advertised by the Natural Resources Management Network. Peter will circulate the ad. • The committee needs to brainstorm well before the position starts so there is clarity on potential projects and collaborations. • There was discussion around the need to collaborate and coordinate projects across land tenures. 	
6	<p>Gurumbai trail footpath construction in wet season</p>	<p>Peter raised concerns about coordination and environmental controls of the Gurumbai trail footpath project and potential impacts to Rapid Creek water quality. Julie explained that works were delayed and not all controls were in place as her role was vacant for 5 months. There will be a tree planting event as part of the project launch.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Julie will provide an update on the Gurumbai trail and disseminate to the group. 	
7	<p>Defence local instructions relating to stormwater flows. to Rapid Creek</p>	<p>Katina provided update on the proposed wording on water mitigation and impacts for storm water flows as she did not get a chance to send it before the meeting.</p> <p>As per Tim's suggestion, the proposed wording for environmental instruction will be updated to more specifically mitigate post-development stormwater flows into Rapid Creek to pre-development levels. This aligns with the committee's goal of ensuring all stakeholders mitigate their impact on Rapid Creek stormwater flows. Katina will run the proposed amendment by the team to get the environmental instruction wording updated accordingly.</p> <p>It was noted that the Jacobs (Marrara) report contains pre-development flow information that can be referenced. Tim reiterated that there is already a commitment for new individual developments to have post-development flows equal to pre-development flows. However, it will be important to clearly articulate that to ADG and Defence who may have differing perspectives.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Katina will provide update in the next meeting. 	
8	<p>Aquatic health reporting for Rapid Creek</p>	<p>Jonathan provided an update on the indicators and values taking shape for the upcoming Darwin Harbour integrated Report Card. He said there were minor changes but suggested reconvening the subcommittee to discuss the indicators that the report card has highlighted like monitoring and</p>	

		<p>evaluation and provide feedback. With the Jonathan proposed the subcommittee reconvene before the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee (DHAC) meeting scheduled for March 11th and provide a summary at the next committee meeting.,</p> <p>Nick recalled the previous subcommittee members collecting data to understand parameters important to members for Rapid Creek health reporting and for NTG to incorporate key minoring gaps within their water quality monitoring program. Julie said she would like to join the subcommittee. Katina, Julie, Jonathan, and Dylan will meet to review the data that DHAC will include in the report card.</p>
9	Environmental DNA sampling program update	<p>Jonathan gave an update on the marine species collected through the Rapid Creek sampling program. Leatherjacket fish, a toxic marine species, have been identified through the sampling process. The team is verifying the data to confirm if these are incorrectly identified freshwater species. Sampling will continue through April. Jonathan expressed gratitude to ADG and Julie for providing information to identify the fish species found in Rapid Creek. Jessica will be a proxy and provide updates to the committee on the sampling program in Jonathon's absence.</p>
10	CDU's interest in applying for an Australian Research Council Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) grant	<p>Dylan provided an update on the water drainage from CDU into Rapid Creek. He suggested constructing a treated wetland on CDU campus to filter the water before it flows into Rapid Creek. This could help improve water quality downstream.</p> <p>With Nicola's departure, Dylan will be taking over management of the CDU Rapid Creek area. He mentioned there may be opportunities for LIEF Grants to fund equipment and infrastructure for ongoing research and monitoring of Rapid Creek by students. Some ideas included installing hydrological instruments to regularly check water levels, flow rates, and water quality. The goal would be to better understand the interactions between groundwater and surface water in the creek's catchment. Dylan plans to submit a grant proposal soon to fund activities where permits, approvals and access considerations would also need to be considered.</p> <p>Jonathan asked how the data collection would help inform understanding of the creek. Dylan said it would provide baseline data to identify needs and opportunities, there is potential to expand the monitoring over time. He will consult with the relevant departments on implementation.</p> <p>Jonathan noted the Rapid Creek Management Plan may have useful information for Dylan. Nick added that engaging community groups and other organizations could provide helpful input and support.</p>
11	Correspondence	
11.1	Correspondence in	<p>The following incoming correspondence was tabled at the meeting for noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Rivers Grant – Round 2 <i>Attachment 3: Urban Rivers Briefing Session</i>
11.2	Correspondence out	<p>The following outgoing correspondence was tabled at the meeting for noting:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter to Victoria Moore from Rapid Creek Water Advisory Committee (RCWAC) - Darwin International Airport Master Plan 2023 <p>Attachment 4: Letter to Victoria Moore</p>
12	Member Reports on activities	
12.1	Rapid Creek Landcare Group (RCLCG)	Peter discussed several updates. The group has started using Facebook to connect with members and share information. Peter noted that the website has been redesigned to be more user-friendly and accessible, Members have been undertaking regular working bees at The Spit revegetation site to control weeds and reduce fire fuel load. 50 new trees have been planted. New members continue joining through the university outreach program.
12.2	Parks and Wildlife	Louise reported the Casuarina Coastal Reserve declaration process to becoming a National Park. They are currently collecting community feedback until April, as it's a legal requirement before they can proceed with the declaration. Once they have the community's support, they will move forward with creating a management plan that's required for legislative purposes. This is a significant opportunity for the community to have a say in how the reserve is managed.
12.3	City of Darwin (CoD)	Nick updated the group regarding the vegetation study around Rapid Creek and Nightcliff. It's both a park and a biodiversity zone, so there is a need to understand better what needs to be protected and how it needs to be managed under those different contexts. They are also planning to have a controlled burn within the Rapid Creek catchment scheduled for May, June.
12.4	Department of Defence (DoD)	Katina reported that DoD are waiting on results of water quality monitoring. Once they become available, Katina will provide to the committee. Runway excavation works has recommenced, sediment controls in place to manage turbid water.
12.5	Charles Darwin University (CDU)	<p>Dylan announced that if any members have ideas for student projects, he is eager to hear them. A talented cohort of students with diverse skillsets are coming through the program, so this is an opportunity to tap into their expertise. Members are encouraged to send Dylan their project proposals so he can match students to the right projects.</p> <p>Students can dedicate a quarter or more of their academic years to these projects, allowing for in-depth, impactful work. Julie asked Dylan for more specifics on the students' areas of expertise. Dylan said he can provide a list of the types of students available. Tim asked about some key areas in which students are available - hydrology, remote sensing, GIS, ecology etc.</p> <p>Peter mentioned an existing mapping project focused on trees and vegetation that could benefit from student collaboration long-term. Tim agreed this type of project allows students to apply their skills in a way that has lasting benefits.</p>
12.6	Airport Development Group (ADG)	Julie presented the latest on the masterplan, which is due for approval and signoff by late February / early March. The airport strategy has been revised based on received feedback. Julie expects Victoria to provide

		<p>official correspondence with feedback ahead of the next meeting, and believe they have sufficiently addressed concerns raised.</p> <p>Stormwater has emerged as a top priority. Work is already underway on stormwater strategy, modelling, and mitigation. Of note, the joint user area remains under Defence's purview. She will provide an update on the Gurumbai trail brochure at the next meeting.</p>
12.7	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL)	Wendy provided an update that recruitment for the Officer Weeds and Fire position, has progressed. The assessment process has concluded and is awaiting final sign-off. Correspondence with Graeme's team will be circulated prior to the next meeting.
12.8	Tim Moore	<p>Tim discussed formalizing flood management procedures for Rapid Creek residents. DIPL provided information on current systems, but questions remain about the status of flood monitoring networks and if they are still active or not. Coordination between emergency services seemed unreliable as the recent incident of five cars being under water did not trigger the alert. Tim asked about the status of the text alert polygon system as it failed to send alerts, perhaps due to a system failure. Tim said residents needed reassurance from DIPL that these systems were working effectively, including the flood basins.</p> <p>Residents also raised concerns about loss of native grasses and indiscriminate spraying by contractors. Previous feedback on these issues from ADG was referenced.</p>
13	Other Business	No other business was discussed.
14	Next meeting	The next meeting will be held in May 2024.
15	Meeting closed	The meeting concluded at 10:50 am.

Actions arising from the meeting

No.	Action	Action officer
1	Share assessment information undertaken by City of Darwin.	Nick
2	Provide an update on weed status.	Wendy
3	Provide an update on Gurumbai trail and disseminate it to the group.	Julie
4	Provide update in the next meeting relating to stormwater flows.	Katina