Meeting Minutes

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| Date: | 26 August 2024 | Location: | Finke Meeting Room, 4th Floor, Goyder |
| Time: | 9:00am – 11:00am |  | Centre, 25 Chun Wah Terrace, Palmerston |
| Chair: | Nick Fewster, City of Darwin | Secretariat: | Parul Chandel, A/Executive Officer Committees, DEPWS |

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| Attendees: | Louise Kean Proxy *for Dean*  Jonathon Burcher  Peter O’Hagan *Proxy for Lisa*  Racheal Curtain  Timothy Moore - *Teams*  Julie Whiting | Parks and Wildlife  Water Resources  Rapid Creek Landcare Group (RCLCG)  Crown Land, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL)  Community member  Airport Development Group (ADG) |
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| Apologies: | Morgan Rickard  Steven Dawson  Dylan Irvine  Katina Croft | City of Darwin (CoD)  Larrakia Nation  Charles Darwin University (CDU)  Department of Defence (DoD) |
| Guests: | Jessica Huxley | Water Resources |

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| **No.** | **Item** | **Action** (e.g. Noting / Discussion / Decision) | |
|  | **Meeting opened** | The Rapid Creek Water Advisory Committee (RCWAC) meeting opened at 9:05 am. | |
| **1** | **Welcome attendance and apologies** | Chairperson, Nick Fewster, opened the meeting and welcomed the members to the 27th meeting. He provided an Acknowledgement of Country.  Apologies were noted from Morgan Rickard, and Steven Dawson.  **Action:**   * Contact Larrakia member Steven Dawson to ask about future attendance of Larrakia Rangers and whether RCWAC can support future attendance. | |
| **2** | **Conflicts of Interest** | No conflicts declared. | |
| **3** | **Minutes of the previous meeting** | The minutes of the previous meeting on 13 May 2024 were circulated to the Committee members prior to the meeting for comments / edits. Peter approved and Racheal seconded the minutes. | |
| 4 | **Actions arising from the previous meetings** | | |
|  | **Action** | **Action Officer** | **Status / Update** |
| **Land Rezoning**  **Small parcel of land to the north-east of Henry Wrigley Bridge.**  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. | Nick Fewster | **In progress**  **Update:** Discussion on land rezoning remains a priority and is ongoing. It is a strategic action within Darwin Greening strategy that we wish to progress.  Nick will provide DIPL with a request from City of Darwin. |
| **Stormwater management Policy**  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 advised it is in the draft local instruction, awaiting final signoff.  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 peak flows. Katina will provide a further update at the next meeting.  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  **Action:**   * Katina to provide update on signoff on local instruction relating to stormwater flows |
| **ADG feedback** | Nick/Tim | **Action:**   * Provide feedback to ADG on the Gurambai Trail and stormwater management (liaise with the communityrepresentative, Tim Moore, to ensure views captured before sending to ADG). |
| **5** | **NTG future commitment on monitoring and reporting for Rapid Creek over the next 5 years** | Jessica Huxley provided an update on NTG monitoring and reporting activities:   * A detailed plan for the next five years was not formalised or available. * eDNA (Environmental DNA) was highlighted as a current focus and that the trial led by Jonathan has concluded. A report will be prepared once these results are reviewed. * eDNA is a current project focused on building capacity within the NT, in partnership with CDU and the museum. This project will develop a comprehensive eDNA library with rigorously identified species. The initial focus will be on the Adelaide River catchment, but Rapid Creek samples will also be taken and reviewed. * The aquatic health and surface water assessment teams are concentrating their efforts on developing an ecological assessment for the Adelaide River catchment over the next year, with limited resources currently allocated to Rapid Creek. * Additional resources are required for further monitoring and reporting for Rapid Creek catchment. * Suggest waiting for 6 months before approaching CE on further monitoring activities for Rapid Creek.   Further discussion from the presentation:   * The Urban Waterways Project was identified as a potential funding source for a consultant aggregating catchment water quality monitoring data and reporting through a framework like the Darwin Harbour Report Card. * The committee agreed in approaching the Department CE early in the new year for further support in monitoring and reporting activities * The existing NTG Rapid Creek webpage was noted as the best place for water quality reporting in addition to the Darwin Harbour Report Card.   **Action:**   * Provide scope for the data aggregation project to Mike Clarke for consideration under Urban Waterways project. * Write letter to CE in relation to further monitoring in Rapid Creek Catchment in February. | |
| **6** | **Airport Development Group - Community feedback - landscaping master plan at DIA** | Topic discussed in Members Reports for ADG. | |
| **7** | **Correspondence** | | |
| **7.1** | **Correspondence in** | The following incoming correspondence was tabled at the meeting for noting:   1. MAGNT Workshop - DNA Barcode needs for the Top End  * ***Attachment 3: DNA barcoding of fauna***   Jonathan mentioned some members from his unit attended. | |
| **7.2** | **Correspondence Out** | 1. Flora and Fauna survey reports  * ***Attachment 4: Request from members*** * ***Attachment 4.1: RCLG email*** * ***Attachment 4.2: Defence email***   Discussion about reported difficulties in receiving the flora and fauna reports due to file size limitations.  **Action:**   * Follow up with members who have not provided reports to Mike Clarke. | |
| 8 | **Member Reports on activities** | | |
| **8.1** | **Rapid Creek Landcare Group (RCLCG)** | * Peter announced a Clean-up Australia event scheduled for September 12th. The clean-up will be in partnership with the City of Darwin and will also align with Larakia Ranger’s efforts. * He provided an update on the roadworks happening on River Creek Rd. There were concerns about dirt mounds left by the contractor near the creek. After raising the issue with Power Water, the mounds have been relocated, which is a positive outcome. * He expressed concerns about the ongoing earthworks and drainage installations at Marrara Caravan Park. There are worries about the impact on creek flow and the potential for erosion and sediment issues. * He discussed recent sightings of cane toads in the creek. Graham Sawyer is arranging for traps to be placed to control the population. * Peter mentioned the need to involve local citizens and community groups in the rehabilitation of the mangrove verge from Trower Road to the back of the CDU. He suggested engaging schools and community groups to participate in the project to align with the Urban Rivers guidelines on community. * He highlighted concerns about the scale of irrigation projects, suggesting that some proposed works might exceed initial project cost expectations.   **Action:**   * Racheal to confirm the sediment and erosion control requirements as part of the development application and an update on whether they have been fully implemented. | |
| **8.2** | **Parks and Wildlife** | Louise reported that preparations for the fire season are underway. Although there have been fewer wildfires this year compared to 2019, vigilance remains crucial. Spot fires and small issues have been managed, but the team remains cautious. The Coastal Reserve has been officially declared a park, which is a positive development. The next step involves public consultation for management plans. | |
| **8.3** | **City of Darwin (CoD)** | * Nick updated that they are aware of the situation at the horse paddock and addressing the stockpiling erosion and sediment controls. * Defence have been approached on planned sediment clean-out at Charles Eaton Drain, with concerns around mosquito breeding and PFAS contaminants. | |
| **8.4** | **Department of Defence (DoD)** | N/A | |
| **8.5** | **Charles Darwin University (CDU)** | Dylan was seeking an update on the progress of the Urban Waterways workshops and next steps. | |
| **8.6** | **Airport Development Group (ADG)** | Julie provided an update on the Airport Master Plan, which is still pending sign-off. Due to a backlog, the approval might be delayed, but there is hope it will be finalized within the year:   * The landscape master plan was scheduled for the last community consultation group but was postponed to the next meeting. * Several trees will be removed as part of the landscaping project, but they will be replaced by new trees in other areas. * She noted that the fire management plan has not been updated recently but is expected to be updated by next year. The current plan is in progress, with fuel load results now available. * The tree removal is planned for areas not within the conservation zones but rather at the front of house area. * There will be a reduction in canopy cover / shade as a result of the news plantings * Replacement trees will be planted in conservation zones, including nesting boxes, to support habitat restoration. * Members suggested that palm trees will not be considered as suitable replacements for canopy cover. | |
| **8.7** | **Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL)** | * Racheal Curtain provided an update on Crown Land’s weed management activities. Weed management will commence in the area over four parcels following the first rain, with another treatment planned six weeks later. Currently, there are no fire management activities or prescribed burns scheduled for the area as the focus is on weed spraying. * She mentioned that although there is a prescribed burn program across the department, it has been completed for the year as of July, fulfilling statutory requirements. * She raised an ongoing issue with a large camp in the City of Darwin land contributing to rubbish flowing into Rapid Creek. This could be a significant problem affecting the area.   **Action:**   * Nick to follow up on City of Darwin officers inspecting the site and cleaning up the area. | |
| **8.8** | **Tim Moore** | Tim reported that the Shine class action for PFAS has been settled and paid out. This settlement applies to residents across the Rapid Creek catchment and potentially some in the Ludmilla catchment where property values may have been negatively impacted. | |
| **8.9** | **Water Resources** | N/A | |
| **9** | **Other Business** | N/A | |
| **10** | **Next meeting** | The next meeting will be held in Mid November 2024. | |
| **11** | **Meeting closed** | The meeting concluded at 10:37 am. | |

Actions arising from the meeting

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| No. | Action | Action officer |
| 1 | Contact Larrakia member Steven Dawson to ask about future attendance of Larrakia Rangers and whether RCWAC can support future attendance. | Parul |
| 2 | Provide update on Defence signoff on local instruction relating to stormwater flows | Katina |
| 3 | Provide feedback to ADG on the Gurambai Trail and stormwater management | Nick and Tim |
| 4 | Provide scope for the data aggregation project to Mike Clarke for consideration under Urban Waterways project. | Jonathon |
| 5 | Write letter to CE in relation to further monitoring in Rapid Creek Catchment in February | Nick |
| 6 | Follow up with members who have not provided reports to Mike Clarke. | Parul |
| 7 | Racheal to confirm the sediment and erosion control requirements as part of the development application and an update on whether they have been fully implemented. | Racheal |
| 8 | Follow up on City of Darwin officers inspecting the camps on City of Darwin managed land adjacent Charles Eaton Road and cleaning up the area. | Nick |
| 9 | Map to members to confirm key biodiversity assets within Rapid Creek to be protected from fire | Nick and Parul |
| 10 | Letter to NTFRS containing map and reiterating biodiversity values protection and the need for a NTFRS dedicated resource for this role | Nick |

Appendix A – Weed and Fire Management Plans

*Some clarification on reports received is required*

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| Plan | Organisation | Date created | Due for review |
| Charles Darwin University | Weed Plan | 2021 | 2026 |
| Fire Plan | 2021 | 2026 |
| City of Darwin | Weed Plan | 2023 | 2028 |
| Fire Plan | 2023 | 2028 |
| Darwin Airport Development Group | Weed Plan | 2021 | 2023 |
| Fire Plan | 2021 | 2023 |
| Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics | Weed Plan | 2020 | 2025 |
| Fire Plan | - | - |
| Department of Defence | Weed Plan | 2022 | 2024 |
| Fire Plan | 2022 | 2024 |
| Parks and Wildlife | Weed Plan | 2020 | 2022 |
| Fire Plan | 2021 | - |