



Community Advisory Panel

Meeting #5 – 1/11/2012

The Wine Centre, Langhorne Creek

Communiqué

CLLMM Director's update – Russell Seaman for Janice Goodwins (DEWNR):

Russell Seaman from the CLLMM Program (standing in for Janice Goodwins), reported to the meeting that current CLLMM Program priorities include the community resilience project, preparing the EPBC Act referral for the proposed SE Flows Restoration project, and variable lake levels and the lake operation strategy. Russell explained that there is also a focus on securing a minimum water level to avoid acidification – finding a 'bottom line' that we can't go past during drought scenarios.

Community Resilience Project – Russell Seaman (DEWNR):

Russell reported that the development of a draft Community Resilience Project plan has almost been completed, and the next stage will be the establishment of a CAP working group. All CAP members will receive a copy of the draft project plan. Russell said it's hoped a final draft will be ready for the CAP's consideration by the end of the financial year.

Aleppo Pine Removal – Hafiz Stewart (DEWNR) and Trevor Harden:

Hafiz Stewart from the CLLMM Program says his team is working with the community to prioritise weed removal from a biodiversity perspective. The CLLMM pest and weed strategy was developed through community consultation, and identifies high priority pest and weed species to manage. He explained there is a need to build ecological resilience in the area, and that while the mature trees at Clayton are not necessarily having an impact around the foreshore, they are having off-site impacts on the cliff top. Trevor Harden explained that referring to the Aleppo pines as "highly invasive" isn't supported by evidence. He said Aleppo pine seeds can be distributed long distances; however the majority of seeds are dispersed close to the mother tree. Trevor believes it's clear the community doesn't understand the consequences of removing such big trees, and further communication needs to be implemented.

CLLMM Vegetation Update – Hafiz Stewart (DEWNR):

Hafiz explained that the aim of the CLLMM Vegetation Program is to stabilise the ecological decline of the region and deliver a healthy and resilient wetland and community which can adapt to changing water levels. He said the Vegetation Program has two components – community and commercial. The community component is managed by the CLLMM Program and is delivered through the Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning association. During the past three years, the community has grown 775,000 plants at 11 community nurseries (including two Ngarrindjeri nurseries). 770,000 plants were planted during this year's planting season, taking the total number of plants planted since the Vegetation program began to 2.7 million. Hafiz explained that monitoring of the planting sites has been undertaken to measure planting success, and the CLLMM Vegetation team is constantly learning and improving techniques.

River Operations Update – Richard Brown (DEWNR):

Richard Brown from DEWNR reported to the CAP meeting that there is currently a 'neutral' pattern, with a drier than average September, especially in the southern part of the Murray-Darling Basin. He believes we could be moving into a wetter weather pattern, and storages are still very full – Hume is at 99%, Dartmouth is full, and Menindie Lakes is at 113%. Richard said there is currently 20 GL of water per day flowing into South Australia, with predicted healthy flows into the Lakes for the remainder of the year.

The Living Murray Update – Adrienne Frears and Kirsty Wedge (TLM):

Adrienne Frears and Kirsty Wedge from The Living Murray program reported that TLM is currently receiving funding deeds from the MDBA, so the development of contracts with service providers can begin. The TLM team is trying to secure an E-Water pulse down the river in December for ecological benefits for fish species, particularly callop. Adrienne explained that there needs to be a more holistic way of operating the rivers, and that TLM is looking for information and feedback from the CAP about raising the lake levels to 0.8m AHD, which would give more security to put water through the barrages. Kirsty explained that TLM is working in partnership with the NRA to produce a DVD for the region, with young Ngarrindjeri people engaged to assist with the DVD's production. The DVD will capture the connection of ecological elements and cultural heritage significance.

Public Access to Tauwitchere – Bill Paterson and Neil Shillabeer:

Bill Paterson and Neil Shillabeer believe public access to the Tauwitchere barrage would add to the awareness and understanding of the region and its connection to the Murray-Darling Basin. An initial proposal has been presented to SA Water, which included building access into the gate entrance which is currently locked, enlarging the car park to accommodate vehicle parking, reinstating the old track once used by fishers, and building a trail to stop at

the barrage. Bill and Neil explained that Tauwitchere is the only structure in the Murray-Darling Basin that doesn't have public access, and it could be used as an educational tool to build understanding of what the barrages do.

Naming of the CLLMM Plantings – Anne Hartnett:

Anne Hartnett reported discussions have been held with staff from DEWNR's *NatureLinks* project, and a sub-committee has also been formed which will meet in the near future. The Lakes Hubs will help by running a competition for the naming of the plantings, with a plan to get school communities involved. Anne said the competition will be launched on World Wetlands Day (February 2, 2013). She believes marketing the lakes differently, or telling another story about the lakes, will ensure the region will be seen in a more positive light, rather than as "evaporation pools" as they are referred to interstate. The Ngarrindjeri support the project.

Community Sculpture Project – Chris Bagley:

Chris Bagley explained this project involves a sculpture trail around the perimeter of the lakes, where international artists will be offered across six sites – Milang, Meningie, Pt Sturt, Raukkan, Sugars Beach, and the Narrung Narrows. The Adelaide Hills sculpture symposium is the model for this project. Chris believes the sculptures will have a dramatic impact, and will help to tell the story about the Murray-Darling Basin and its estuary. It could also become an important educational tool for students and tourists.

CAP Website – Karyn Bradford:

Karyn Bradford reported that CAP information is embedded into the Lakes Hub website, and CAP member's email addresses are available on the site. CAP meeting communiqués will also be posted on the site. There's also a need to identify The Living Murray program. Karyn explained that all CAP members will be given a username and password to access a Members Only page, where presentations, minutes, notes, etc, will be posted. Stuart at the Lakes Hub is the website co-ordinator and will manage the site.

Narrung Proposal – Clem Mason:

Clem Mason reported to the meeting that salinity in Lake Albert is currently 3,700 EC, and that will increase as we move further into the summer months. He said the community is disappointed the salinity issue hasn't been properly addressed by the government. The bund in the Narrung Narrows served its purpose to protect the waterway, but the Causeway is impeding flow into the Narrows. Clem said the option of getting rid of the Causeway is not viable, and the solution for effective flow through the Narrows is culverts in the Causeway and dredging out the excess silt. Clem believes water cycling is not working, and the effect of the wind is not enough. He said the community, industry, and the Ngarrindjeri are working

together to find a solution, and the EPA has indicated it wants to be involved. Clem said the community wants to work with the science and return Lake Albert like it was.

Five Point Plan – Bill Henshall and Sam Dodd (MNLIA):

Bill Henshall and Sam Dodd from the Meningie Narrung Lakes Irrigators Association explained that the MNLIA has developed a Five Point Plan of actions that might improve Lake Albert and the Coorong, addressing social, economic, agricultural, environmental, and social amenity concerns. The Plan includes:

- removal of the ferry causeway at Narrung
- removal of the bund in its entirety including the siltation
- dredging the Narrows to 1965 bathymetry
- conducting a feasibility study into a connector from lake Albert to the Coorong
- returning the natural flows from the SE to the South Lagoon.

Bill said there's been no environmental study into a connector – engineering reports support the feasibility of a connector, but only looking at hydrology and engineering. The Ngarrindjeri are not supportive of a channel, only a pipeline concept. Sam explained that the river and lakes are fully engineered, and a connector would compliment the engineering already in place. He said the problems associated with turbidity – of placing Lake Albert water into the Coorong – won't be an issue because of the low volumes of water compared with the volume of flood water that has entered through the barrages from Lake Alexandrina during the past two years. Sam believes there would be minimal negative impact to the Coorong, as a result of the large volume of water that naturally flows past the proposed outlet, giving an automatic mixing. He said that without the connector, Meningie's economic prosperity is severely compromised.

Lake Albert Scoping Study – John Howard (DEWNR):

John Howard from the CLLMM Program reported that final funding approval and an announcement from the Commonwealth about the Lake Albert scoping study is expected soon. He said the objectives of the study reflect those of the CLLMM Long Term Plan, including that the lake remains predominantly freshwater and operates at variable water levels, the lake's biological and ecological features are protected, there are adequate flows of suitable quality water to maintain Ngarrindjeri cultural life, and that productive and profitable primary industries continue. John explained that the study will identify specific flow and water level targets, and will suggest potential management actions under different climate scenarios to sustain water quality and ecological health in Lake Albert. John said the scoping study will consider all of the points of the MNLIA's Five Point Plan that relate directly to Lake Albert.

Other Business:

Working Groups – a Community Resilience working group and a Lake Albert working group have been formed, and both groups will report back to the CAP on a regular basis.

River Murray Barrage Operations Meetings – Adrienne Frears from The Living Murray program raised concerns about community disconnection from barrage operations meetings. She said SA Water has offered to present to the CAP on barrage operations in the near future.

World Wetlands Day – A small working group (organised by the Lakes Hubs) will meet soon to discuss a World Wetlands Day event, with the outcomes of the meeting to be presented at the next CAP meeting.

ABC 'Catalyst' Program – Reporters and crews from Catalyst will be visiting the CLLMM region in mid December to film a story about the Coorong, to be broadcast during 2013.

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