



**Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth  
Community Advisory Panel (CAP)**

**Meeting #9 – 13/6/2013**

**The Wine Centre, Langhorne Creek**

**Communiqué**

**School Engagement and Curricula – Chris Bagley**

Chris explained to the CAP that the Basin Plan needs support from an informed citizenry to fulfil its potential for rational governance of the river system. He said that the CAP can use its influence to press SA Government to ensure that the SA school curricula will provide every school student who reaches Year 12 with a comprehensive understanding of the vital river system. Chris wants support from the CAP for his proposal for compulsory curricula on Murray Darling Basin. Chris believes that this presents worlds best practice for critical issues for this century in the management of river systems. He also believes that this presents a wonderful opportunity to offer a solid grounding for young people and thus creating informed citizens who are custodians of the Basin. Has the potential to show how a river system can be shared sustainably across Australia and Chris says that it is our responsibility. There is an opportunity for younger generations to be on the front foot for issues which are critically important.

**Lake Albert Scoping Study – Neil Shillabeer and Clem Mason**

Neil advised that the Lake Albert Scoping Study Working Group has met on numerous occasions with site visits and round table discussions on engineering, modelling and structures, lake cycling and history and benefits. Neil advised that the final draft of preliminary modelling report was received from WBM. This work included a review of previous modelling, consideration of each potential management action conceptually (without active modelling), and calculations of salt balance in Lake Albert. He also said that they are currently procuring the services of WBM and the internal modelling group to undertake the scenario modelling (mid June to September). Neil advised that Square Holes have undertaken a community engagement study in Lake Albert region. He said that they have provided initial feedback that the community was very enthusiastic, passionate and a pleasure to work with and that the draft report has been received and is presently undergoing internal review before being sent to the various project groups (Community Reference Group, Steering Committee, and Project Advisory Group) and eventually will be circulated to the CAP and general public. Neil advised that a Talking Heads session is being planned at the Meningie Hub for 23rd July (to be advertised in the Lakelander). This is an opportunity to update the broader community on project progress (community requirements study results, preliminary modelling and engineering feasibility in particular) and the next steps for the project. Neil said that a project update provided to the Yaluwar

Ruwe Group and discussion on the Ngarrindjeri Position Paper we are seeking as part of the Scoping Study. The Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority will undertake broader Ngarrindjeri consultation before preparing a paper that provides comment on the various potential management actions.

### **Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation – The Hon. Ian Hunter**

The Minister was welcomed to the CAP meeting and thanked for making the time to come and see the CAP members. The Minister assured the CAP members that the government has made a commitment to ensure that the community is central to decision-making and their role on the CAP is certainly contributing to this directive of the Premier. He acknowledged the importance of the community's role in managing the health of this region and commended the community-based and Ngarrindjeri nurseries noting that they are critical to the success of the annual vegetation work. The Minister acknowledged the change of focus from drought recovery to work aiming to build resilience into the region, and its people, and said that this presents us with an excellent opportunity to ensure all of the community knowledge in this group will provide advice and direction on government projects in the region going forward. He emphasised how important the knowledge and advice the CAP has on the future of the Murray-Darling system, and the influence community can have in government's decision-making process becoming even more vital. He said that the Murray Darling Basin requires fair negotiations across the whole system the Commonwealth needs to take control of the whole system and make decisions in the best interest of the nation. He said that it will take maturity and long term commitment and have a holistic approach to the river. He wished the CAP all the best with its deliberations and reiterated that he is committed to working with communities, taking advice and making decisions together. He said that he looks forward to working with the CAP to achieve good outcomes for the state and this region. The Minister then opened up to the floor for questions by CAP members.

### **Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority Update – Grant Rigney**

Grant provided an update on the MLDRIN (Murray-Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations) meeting in Melbourne and said that there are some major issues with some of the Icon Sites across the border and SA is a clear leader with ECD and monitoring for the Icon Sites. He advised that the Ngarrindjeri are still in discussions with the Department in regards to the SE Flows Project and that they have also been heavily involved with field trips and site meetings for the Riverine Recovery Project. He advised that Uncle Tom's passing has left some significant gaps and the NRA are still working through their governance structure. Grant said that the NRA have employed an ecologist (Ben Taylor) as their NRA Wetlands Specialist to provide advice to the NRA on wetland management.

### **Lakes Hub Funding – Karyn Bradford**

Karyn gave a presentation to the CAP on the importance of the Lakes Hubs and the role they play in the community. She said that the Hubs enable local people to be involved in the decision making processes and the Hub and GWLAP staff are centrally based to give technical advice where needed. She also emphasised the important role the Hubs play in supporting community nurseries network with 10 organisations involved in community propagation program. Karyn also mentioned that the Hubs have played a vital role in building capacity within the community and that there has been an exponential increase from species and numbers grown through the nursery network. She said that

the Hubs also provide an important link liaising with Government staff and providing training opportunities which brings the region together which in turn helps to establish social enterprises in the region and job opportunities. Karyn advised that the GWLAP has provided a letter to Alexandrina Council representative Keith Parkes and GWLAP Board member Chris Bagley, which supports the ongoing funding for the Lakes Hubs post 2014. She explained that the letter refers to funding for the Lakes Hubs which is set to finish on 30 June 2014 however the CLLMM Program is funded to June 2016 leaving a 2 year lag. She said that all community activities for the Program are supported by Hubs, from coordinating roles, education roles, raising awareness and facilitating on-ground works. Karyn requested on behalf of MDCA that the CAP supports efforts to have the funding extended to match with the whole CLLMM program until June 2016. She said that this will also allow extra time to enable Hubs to become sustainable in the long run and leverage funds from other sources ongoing.

### **Ecological Character Description – Rebecca Quin and Jason Higham**

Rebecca provided a presentation on the Ecological Character Description (ECD) for the CLLMM site. She advised that the team is currently updating the 2006 ECD to make it more relevant to today. She advised that the CLLMM site has been a Ramsar site since 1985 and under the Ramsar convention this ensures activities don't harm the site. To become a Ramsar site the site is assessed against 9 criteria but only needs to qualify against one of these criteria. Rebecca explained that Ecological Character is a combination of ecosystem components, processes and services. She said that the ECD provides information about environmental features and services of the site. It also informs development of management plans and design of programs to monitor and detect change. She then explained the reasoning behind updating the ECD due to the CLLMM Project capturing substantial data over the past few years which would provide significant improvements to the current ECD. She said that the team reviewed the current ECD against the national guidelines back in 2011. She advised that the review found that the doesn't meet current requirements under the national guidelines. Rebecca explained the relevance of updating the ECD and also explained that it not only captures and documents new information that the CLLMM program and others are collecting but also allows for a baseline for management planning and action.

### **Major Projects Update – Janice Goodwins**

Janice provided a brief update on Major Projects. She advised that the Vegetation Program's planting season commenced and planting will be happening for the next 3 months with around 1 million plants to be planted. She said that there are 12 staff employed to manage the project and they now have the Operations Crew (previously employed with the Department as the Fire Crew) also employed to assist with site preparation, hold stations, weed removal and site maintenance. Janice advised that the Fishways Project has been submitted to the Commonwealth for approval. She also advised that the Currency Creek regulator removal stage 1 was completed on 23 May with construction of disposal basin complete and pipes erected. She said that the pumping has now commenced and all operating smoothly. She expects that Stage 3 to be complete by late July.

### **Water Resources Report – Jarrod Eaton**

Jarrod provided an update on the water resources for the region. He mentioned that last month there was some good rainfall events however inflows have been about ½ the long term average but is confident things are trending in the right direction. He advised that the rainfall outlook for the next

8 days is up to 250mls in the catchment. He said that stream-flow outlook with mean stream-flow events are also tracking well with the weather outlook increasing the chances of above average rainfall over southern Australia. Jarrod advised on the barrage outflows saying that the Goolwa Barrage is to open next week but has been closed due to head difference due to tides. He said that there needs to be 2000ML/per day to keep the Murray Mouth open. Jarrod said that we are limited in how much water can be accessed by the Commonwealth and unregulated flows for October could target a cycle however this is dependent on flows coming downstream and different management actions undertaken. He said that they are still negotiating for additional environmental water for SA for 2013/14.

### **The Living Murray Update – Adrienne Frears**

Adrienne spoke about the E- watering priorities for 2014. She explained that there is a combined bid for the Lakes, Coorong and River Murray channel and that there is a need for an early spring flux to both provide fish spawning outcomes in the river channel and to continue barrage releases throughout the year. She advised that the bids are submitted to the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) and TLM. She said that they would prefer TLM water earlier and CEWH water over summer and autumn. The amount of e-water requested depends on the water availability scenario we are in next year (whether it is dry, median or wet). She said that 200GL would be for lake level cycling in autumn to provide a re-fill volume to restore the Lakes to normal pool level. She said that the pulses aid breeding events in certain fish species and also work on reducing salinity in the Coorong through barrage releases. Adrienne is currently doing some forward planning and is keen to get feedback from the CAP on barrage operations over recent years as they have been adhoc and they have been capturing some learnings. Adrienne is currently looking at where to prioritise barrage releases over 13/14 and targeting releases for Murray Mouth and diadromous fish movement. This will assist in the planning for the next few months during the barrage teleconference meetings. She said that they need to gain ideas from community to help inform the decision making which will inform the longer term barrage operating plan. Adrienne also mentioned that it is difficult to drop lake levels at certain times of the year due to other lake users not being able to access water during these times therefore they need to look at impacts on everyone and consider these. In terms of the Fishways, Adrienne advised that between 90-140GL per year is needed for current fishways and they don't require too much extra e-water to keep the fishways operating on top of entitlement flows. She said that they are currently fitting the pieces together to get the longest outflow to allow for this. She says that the Fishways are the first to open and the last to close. Adrienne reported that the TLM monitoring reports will be available in July for the CAP's viewing.

### **Naming of the Plantings and Infrastructure Constraints – Anne Hartnett**

Anne spoke about her proposal around the 'Naming of the CLLMM Plantings'. She explained that there are over 50 names/ideas that have been entered and many are snappy and give a good indication of what is going on down in the region. Anne is also keen to have a link into Nature Links. Anne would like the CAP to review the names and indicate interest against which name is appropriate. She advised that the names were displayed on the Lakes Hub website for voting. Anne raised her concerns around Lake level heights and that the levels can't be reduced too low due to constraints in the system. Anne says that she reviewed the Long Term Plan and found that priority

actions for 2010-2014 are to manage variable lake levels. Anne noticed that the current levels are just over 0.6AHD and high level is 0.8AHD however with wind seiching effects, the levels can be much more variable and have detrimental impacts on the lakeshore. She has been speaking with GWLAP about lakeshore erosion and whilst some sides of the lakes are eroding, some have significant build up. As such, Anne is requesting that money be made available to address the current infrastructure constraints in the system. She said that it could fit in with the MDBA who are looking into their Constraint Management Strategy for E-water with a workshop held in Murray Bridge just a week ago. She believes that between the State and Commonwealth there could be \$\$\$ made to address this. Anne said that there is a need to evaluate the damage that is being done and then look at proposals to address these. Janice advised that the Project is currently being discussed with the Commonwealth and she will ensure that the CAP is kept informed and involved.

The next CAP meeting will be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2013

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Major Projects

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