

NRM Council

Aboriginal Statewide Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting No 9. Meeting held Tuesday 8th May 2007 from 12:30pm-5:00pm
Level 2, Yungondi Building, Uni SA Campus, City West, 70 North Terrace, Adelaide

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and acknowledged the meeting was being held on the traditional lands of the Kaurna people.

Peter paid respects to Veronica Brodie who passed away recently. Veronica was a strong defender of Aboriginal rights and a respected and loved elder. Members held a one-minute silence in memory of the Late Veronica Brodie.

Present: Peter Buckskin (Chair), Lynette Crocker, Fraser Vickery, Tim Hartman, Karina Lester, Donald Fraser, Carolyn Ireland, Marilyn Ah Chee and Charlie Jackson (proxy for George Cooley).

Apologies: Debra Haseldine, Hughie Windlass, George Cooley, Mitch Dunnett, Derek Walker, John Chester and Andrew Johnson.

In Attendance: David Hanna (Executive Support DWLBC).

2. Minutes

Fraser Vickery moved and Lynette Crocker seconded that minutes of the previous meeting be accepted. The Committee resolved to confirm the minutes as a correct record of the February 2007 meeting of ASAC.

3. Business Arising From Previous Minutes

David Hanna summarised each of the 9 actions from the previous meeting. The majority were noted as completed with further discussion on those outstanding as follows:

Action 2 (Meeting 8) - Obtain outstanding reports from all regions regarding NRM Transition Project.

David Hanna reported that he had received correspondence from David New that the Steering Committee had asked him to stop working on the regional report deliverable part of the transition project.

It was noted that information is starting to be posted on the regional notice boards section of the website (www.aboriginalnrm.com), the Skills Register is being developed and will be functional at the end of the month.

Action 3 (Meeting 8) - Update CDEP information and provide a list of titleholders of ALT lands on the www.aboriginalnrm.com.

This action will be undertaken by David New as part of loading the Internet site with further information.

Action 7 (Meeting 8) - Draft ASAC Work Plan.

This action was deferred to this meeting (meeting # 9) so it could be discussed as a group.

Action 8 (Meeting 7) - ASAC members to provide comments to Debra Haseldine on volunteers in Aboriginal communities.

Debra was absent from the meeting and therefore this item was deferred.

4. Correspondence

Letter to Chair of ALT

Peter Buckskin wrote to George Tongerie, Chair of the Aboriginal Lands Trust on 16th April inviting the ALT to participate in ASAC meetings. A copy of the letter was circulated to all members in attendance.

Peter noted that he had received a call from John Chester earlier that day indicating that he was not going to be able to attend the ASAC meeting on behalf of ALT as he was were busy preparing material for the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Peter noted that the ALT has major concerns with the changes being made to their legislation regarding appointment of members to Boards. It is now the responsibility of the Chief Executive of Department of Premier and Cabinet to appoint members to the ALT. It was noted that the government did not consult with the ALT before making this decision.

The Aboriginal Lands Trust is a very important Aboriginal organisation. It produced the ground - breaking "Strategy for Aboriginal Managed Lands in South Australia" (SAMLISA) report. Since the NRM Act was proclaimed and the introduction of NRM Boards, the ALT has had to compete with other contractors for funding to carry out on-ground works. The ALT has not been able to win the same level of funding it has in the past and therefore its base has been eroded.

Concern was expressed that current governance arrangements, including the regional NRM model, is causing increasing disharmony between Aboriginal nations and Aboriginal organisations and an erosion of the rights of Aboriginal people. Though ASAC is established to deal with NRM matters from an Aboriginal perspective it is impossible to separate caring for the land from health and welfare issues.

Review of regional investment strategies

ASAC provided comment on the regional NRM board investment strategies. A copy of this correspondence was circulated to members in attendance.

David Hanna outlined the responsibility of the Council Assessment Sub-committee (CASC) to review the investment strategies on behalf of NRM Council. CASC invited ASAC to comment on the Aboriginal aspects of the regional investment strategies. ASAC provided comment on only two of the eight NRM regional investment strategies. Peter indicated that this was a failure on behalf of ASAC.

Peter noted that he was concerned that ASAC are not supporting Karina Lester adequately in her role on the NRM Council and stated that this is an area that ASAC must improve upon.

Lynette suggested we could do business differently and meet as a group to discuss the regional investment strategies. Karina noted that it is important to have Aboriginal people on each of the NRM Boards as this would help ASAC members in their role in reviewing the regional documents.

Letter from Merv Lewis re Aboriginal membership on the Northern & Yorke (N&Y) NRM Board

David Hanna circulated the letter that Merv Lewis (Chair of N&Y) sent to Dennis Mutton (Chair of NRM Council) in relation to the reasons why N&Y NRM Board has not yet nominated someone for ASAC.

Charlie noted that it seems that people are scared that their decision to nominate a particular Aboriginal person may pre-empt who is the native title-holders. They should not be worried about this. Charlie's advice to Merv is to make the decision. Peter noted that there is an issue of representation

versus advocacy. Whoever is appointed to an NRM Board or an ASAC position must be an advocate for the Aboriginal people in their area. Peter noted that he doesn't represent anyone as Chair of ASAC but he can make some inroads through his networks and he can represent the Indigenous perspective.

Lynette noted that one Aboriginal person who had nominated for a position on the N&Y NRM Board was not successful.

Karina Lester suggested that ASAC could nominate some Aboriginal people to sit on the N&Y NRM Board and ASAC. After some discussion ASAC resolved to recommend the following people to Merv Lewis through a letter from Peter Buckskin to Dennis Mutton:

- Rose Turner
- Doug Turner
- Quentin Augius
- Clinton Wanganeen
- Vincent Branson (Ngadjuri)

It was agreed that all of these people have appropriate networking skills and are familiar with natural resources management and therefore any one of them would be a good advocate for the region.

It was also agreed that David Hanna would find out who has already been put forward as a nomination to Northern & Yorke and those people would also be included as recommended nominations from ASAC.

It was agreed that a gender balance should be aimed for in the recommendations from ASAC to Northern & Yorke.

Charlie Jackson indicated that he would raise at presiding members forum the importance of Aboriginal membership on NRM Boards and the commitment of those Boards to having a member on ASAC and supporting that member.

ACTION: ASAC to write to Dennis Mutton requesting him to forward ASAC's suggested nominations for N&Y's representation on ASAC to the Presiding Member of the Northern & Yorke NRM Board. David Hanna to prepare first draft on behalf of ASAC.

5. Member update

Peter Buckskin (Chair)

Peter will continue discussions with the School of Natural and Built Environment at Uni SA Mawson Lakes Campus to see if ASAC could engage some students doing their honours to undertake some work on behalf of ASAC. Peter indicated that the Head of School is interested in further discussions and has endorsed in principle this approach. This initiative will not cost ASAC anything as the University will pay for the work the students do and it is great for the graduates as it makes their degrees more relevant by contributing to the here and now. This initiative can be flagged in the ASAC Work Plan.

Marking the 50 years since NADOC is an opportunity for Aboriginal people to reignite reconciliation. Peter noted that \$460m needs to be injected into Aboriginal health in Australia.

Peter noted that he is starting work on 3 national consultancies, which will keep him busy from June through to August. This will prevent him doing much work for ASAC during this time.

Peter's time in his role with the university is split between 40% research, 40% teaching and 20% community work. ASAC is part of his community work component.

Peter noted that ASAC only has minimal resources and it is difficult to be proactive and make strategic interventions with minimal resourcing. ASAC has to be smart where it intervenes and how aggressively it drives that intervention.

ASAC to date has provided a good opportunity to have a yarn about Indigenous issues in a culturally aware and culturally safe space.

Karina Lester (NRM Council)

NRM Council met on Friday 4th May. Some of the NRM Council members were a bit worried about government administrative boundary issues and asked Karina to talk to ASAC about this issue.

Minister Gago will be attending the July meeting of NRM Council. This presents an opportunity for ASAC to influence what NRM Council discuss with the Minister.

Karina noted that Peter Buckskin and Dennis Mutton are going to talk about communication issues at some point.

NRM Council has endorsed Kent Martin as a proxy for Karina Lester on ASAC.

A significant piece of work that NRM Council is undertaking is the principles for distributing state government funds to regions.

Marilyn Ah Chee (AW)

Oodnadatta is a town that is 94% Aboriginal people. The town's folk have been charged with a levy for receiving television. Oodnadatta receives four channels: 7, Imparja, ABC and SBS. Two of these stations have been cut off because the town have not paid their levy. The town is also faced with very high electricity bills. Marilyn indicated that she and others had tried to protest their case but to no avail. Chairman of Progress Association has something to do with it however the Outback Areas Trust was thought to be ultimately responsible. Disappointment was registered with the way that Adam Plate is administrating matters at Oodnadatta.

Action: Peter Buckskin to write to Outback Areas Trust registering ASAC's disappointment with this matter (with a copy to Dennis Mutton).

Lynette Crocker (A&MLR)

The 4 nations group meets every 2 months. This group has developed a 4 nation service level agreement with the NRM Board. They have also developed a strategic alliance plan, which is being put to the board in June with the protocol document and the tools of knowledge document. The 4 nations group have recently been discussing the bigger picture – particularly what the natural resources management landscape will look like in 50 years.

The A&MLR Board have been briefed on a whole range of matters. The Board understands the importance of "selling" the levy to community (what is it for – what is it going towards). Local Councils will collect the levy on behalf of the Board.

Funds for natural resources management is dispersed through the Investment Strategy. When applications come in we sit down and review. Lynette sits on a Coast and Marine committee. There is another national organisation called Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA's). Local Govt Association and Wilderness Society have helped with a petition regarding management of the St Vincent coast line. Lynette indicated she could send out IPA grant information to interested ASAC members.

The A&MLR NRM Board supported the Conservation Café, which was part of the Port Festival from April 21 - 29. The Conservation Café supported Aboriginal cultural pathways and NRM engagement and Lynette suggested that it was an excellent way to engage people.

Participated in a riverboat tour of the Port River, which included a talk about the history and significance of the Port. Information about the history of the area is very important. Pat Harbison from St Vincent Gulf friends group came and gave a presentation.

Lynette suggested there could be a Caring for Country Unit that would help deliver NRM outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Lynette is on the Board and Committee to make a difference for Aboriginal people.

Conflict of interest is an issue for Aboriginal people on multiple boards. This is an area where ASAC could support Aboriginal people.

Lynette suggested recording sites with video so you don't have to rely on written text.

Fraser Vickery (KI)

Fraser indicated he is hoping to get more engagement with Kurna and Ngarrindgerri people.

Organising cultural awareness training for the KI NRM Board members. In response Charlie suggested that cultural awareness training should always be done on land (not in the city) to give white people exposure to Aboriginal culture.

Fraser's main role is to report back to the KI NRM Board about the outcomes of ASAC meetings.

Tim Hartman (SE)

Tim is the Chair of the South East Indigenous Focus Group. The Focus Group has representatives from the family groups in the region. The South East NRM Board is good at engaging with Aboriginal people in the region however they do not have an Aboriginal person on their NRM Board.

The Indigenous Focus Group has looked at all the Aboriginal sites in the region. The Focus Group has started doing on-ground works with funds allocated for Aboriginal lands in the SE. Issues being addressed include old wells, animal control, fencing and cleaning up rubbish on land.

Robin Campbell has ably filled the role of Aboriginal Land Coordinator while Leonie Casey has been sick. Leonie is recovering well and may be able to continue her work again soon.

The whole SE NRM Board has completed cultural awareness training.

Carolyn Ireland (SA AL)

Thanked all members for being welcomed to ASAC. Important to keep the dialogue going.

The SA Arid Lands NRM Board meet 6 times a year for 2 days at a time. Fred Tanner resigning from the board and ASAC was a big loss. He was a great attribute to the Arid Lands. With Fred's help they came up with a Board guideline for Aboriginal engagement. All staff have been through the cultural awareness training.

The SA Arid Lands NRM Board are meeting at Woomera later this month, which will be a time for inducting the 6 NRM groups. Caroline noted that most NRM Groups have an Aboriginal member.

The SA AL NRM board is in the process of nominating an Aboriginal person for ASAC.

ACTION: Peter Buckskin to write a letter to Fred Tanner thanking him for his contribution on ASAC.

Charlie Jackson (AW)

Has a meeting with 2 Ministers regarding APY lands on Friday morning. What Aboriginal people want is completely different to what the white people want.

AW gets \$2.5m NHT money. Also eligible for lots more money through other sources. Suggested that Arid Lands get some money to focus on Aboriginal engagement.

Concern about the Aboriginal communities outside of AW as there seems there are going to be a lot of programs that Aboriginal people will miss out on.

Expressed concern that if the Aboriginal Lands Trust is eroded, the Aboriginal lands will not be managed.

Donald Fraser

Donald had nothing to add to Charlies update.

6. ASAC Work Plan

There was general discussion about how ASAC might function in the future. The key points are listed as follows:

- Lynette suggested that if 1% of the total levy money collected by Councils for NRM was provided to the Aboriginal State Advisory Committee they could function much more effectively.
- Karina suggested that she could support ASAC (in conjunction with David) as she has more time available at the moment. Perhaps there is an opportunity for her to access a computer within DWLBC?
- Suggested that a new vision is created. This will help spread the message to other Aboriginal people.
- Suggested that ASAC members receive an IT allowance to help cover costs out-of-session. Caroline indicated that SA Arid Lands NRM Board members receive a one off payment.
- Karina recalled that some time back ASAC wrote to each Presiding Member asking them what engagement policy they have in place for Aboriginal people. Karina asked what response we received from the Presiding Members.
- Suggested a one-day workshop with general discussion at the start, then engagement of Chairs of Aboriginal Advisory Groups and then an ASAC facilitated session.
- ASAC needs to ensure that what they say they are going to deliver is achievable.
- Carolyn suggested that ASAC start by highlighting their achievements to date. This will help plan for the future.
- The Resource Manual for Engagement of Aboriginal People has been developed and this will be an excellent resource for NRM workers.
- ASAC engagement has not worked too well to date because of capacity. To do this ASAC needs some more support.
- Noted that the workshop should not clash with NADOC week or Reconciliation week.
- Important to draw on good work being done by SA Murray Darling Basin and SA Arid Lands NRM Board.
- Employment of Aboriginal people is crucial in natural resources management. This will help with self-determination and empowerment.
- Engaging students at the Indigenous School, Uni SA City West Campus to undertake research on behalf of ASAC.

ACTION: Karina to work with Peter, Charlie and David to develop a process for a one-day workshop. The workshop will be split into two halves. The first half would be ASAC members and the Chairs of Indigenous Focus Groups. The second part of the day will be for ASAC members to develop the work plan taking into account the recommendations from the morning.

ACTION: David Hanna to ask John Gavin how much the IT allowance payment is that SA Arid Land NRM board members receive.

7. Other Business

Karina noted that there is no Aboriginal person on the Eyre Peninsula NRM Board. Mitch Dunnett is on the Indigenous Focus Group but not on the Board.

Charlie noted that some Boards seem to be using Native Title claims as an excuse to not have indigenous participation on the Board.

Peter remarked that it was great to see Charlie Jackson at ASAC as he is a Presiding Member of one of the Boards.

ACTION: Peter Buckskin to write to Dennis Mutton urging him to write to Brian Foster in regard Aboriginal membership on the Eyre Peninsula NRM Board.

8. Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday 7th August, 9am – 5pm.

Venue: Level 2 Conference Room, Yungondi Building, Uni SA, City West Campus, 70 North Terrace, Adelaide.

9. Close

The Chairperson closed the meeting at 4.00pm.