

NRM Council

Aboriginal Statewide Advisory Committee

**Minutes of Meeting No 8. Meeting held Thursday 22nd February 2007 from 1.00 pm-5:00pm
At 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. A special welcome was given to Tim Hartman as the new member of ASAC representing the South East. Scott Donner was also welcomed for his first meeting of ASAC attending on behalf of Andrew Johnson.

Present: Peter Buckskin (Chair), George Cooley, Lynette Crocker, Debra Haseldine, Fraser Vickery, Derek Walker and Tim Hartman.

Apologies: Donald Fraser, Hughie Windlass, Marilyn Ah Chee, Karina Lester, Mitch Dunnett and Andrew Johnson.

In Attendance:

David Hanna (Executive support), Pam Chapman (DWLBC), David Baker (DPC), Heidi Crow (DPC), Jason Downs (Rural Solutions SA), David New (Rural Solutions SA) and Scott Donner (DWLBC).

2. Minutes

Lynette Crocker moved and Debra Haseldine seconded the minutes of the previous meeting to be accepted. The Committee resolved to confirm the minutes as a correct record of the November meeting of ASAC.

3. Business Arising From Previous Minutes

In reviewing the action list, the Chair requested that each action be numbered in sequential order for future meetings.

ALT attendance at ASAC: ASAC members expressed concern that ALT have not yet responded to an invitation by ASAC to attend a meeting. Peter Buckskin resolved to write to the ALT to urge them to attend ASAC's next meeting.

ACTION: Peter Buckskin to write to Chair of ALT to urge them to attend ASAC's next meeting.

NRM Transition Project: David New reported that he had received updates from Deb Haseldine (re EP) and Derek Walker (re N&Y) and thanked them for this. David requested a briefing from each of the remaining 6 regions. ASAC members agreed it was important that this review is completed.

ACTION: David New and David Hanna to work collaboratively to obtain these updates from ASAC members.

Indigenous consultation on EP: Mitch Dunnett first raised this issue at meeting # 6 of ASAC. Mitch Dunnett was not in attendance at the meeting but he advised the Executive Officer that he was happy to talk to the Chair about this issue out-of-session. The Chair indicated he was happy to discuss this with Mitch. ASAC heard from Jason Downs that a meeting of the EP Indigenous Focus Group was organised for late January however was cancelled due to lack of numbers. Jason advised that an alternative time for this meeting has been organised.

Rural Solutions SA have been engaged by EP NRM Board to facilitate the advisory group on their behalf. The interim focus group commented on the EP draft investment strategy and developed some brochures for indigenous people.

4. Correspondence

Dennis Mutton (Chair of NRM Council) wrote to Peter Buckskin on 13th February. A copy of the letter was circulated to all members in attendance.

A number of issues in relation to the letter were discussed:

- With regard NRM Council's suggestion for an ASAC Work Plan, Peter indicated he was keen for ASAC not to be just a rubber stamp but to influence the agenda and engage with indigenous people so he supported the work plan. Derek supported these comments and went on to say that investment in NRM seems to be inconsistent. ASAC can play an important role in the review of the Investment Strategies.
- The work plan needs to explore how ASAC engages with Aboriginal people and what is meant by consultation. ASAC needs to create an environment where people feel they can contribute and participate (members and non-members).
- Peter Buckskin suggested that Karina may need some support feeding information back to NRM Council from ASAC. It was agreed that Karina would be supplied with a written report to help her feed back to Council.
- Peter noted that Debra Haseldine was congratulated for her efforts on the Volunteer Committee.
- ASAC agreed that the Committee would write to the Chair of NRM Council after each meeting of ASAC.
- Derek registered his concern that Northern & Yorke do not yet have a representative. Jason Downs noted that the Aboriginal Lands Trust have arranged a meeting with the Northern & Yorke NRM Board and PIRSA Rural Solutions to provide ideas to the Board about how to engage with Aboriginal land managers in the region. It was also noted that the Board has made provision through its regional investment strategy for engaging Aboriginal communities in NRM in the region.
- With regard volunteerism it was thought that some social adjustment would be required for people to engage. ASAC suggested that the hurdles to Aboriginal engagement be looked at.
- George Cooley noted that it is mostly the same Aboriginal people who sit on NRM Boards and Committees. This can make it more difficult for messages to be relayed to communities if those people miss meetings. ASAC needs to consider how to get information past the front gate of the community.

5. General Business

a) NRM Transition Update

Jason Downs presented on the NRM Transition Update on behalf of David New. Jason showed ASAC members the web site www.aboriginalnrm.com.au. The website will be used as a vehicle to convey NRM information relating to Aboriginal people. The website is now live but is still under construction - David New is developing Regional Notice Boards, Case Studies and a Skills Register for the website. Dave aims to continually update the website. Jason indicated that there is provision for ASAC to have a page on the web page notice board. A core focus of this website is to identify Aboriginal people, govt organisations etc who can help an NRM Board with work.

There is a method to log the numbers of people viewing the website which will help determine if the site is working well or needs to be improved. Jason noted there has not been a great deal of selling of the website at this point.

Lynette queried whether EBay and Wikipedia could be linked to on the website? Jason responded that this had not been looked into yet; however noted that there will be document downloadable from the site for free.

George suggested that a list of the titleholders of Lands Trust land be included on the website as many people make the mistake of contacting only the people living on the land (who are not necessarily the owner). CDEP information on the site needs to be revised as many CDEP services have been axed (particularly in urban areas). Peter Buckskin noted that many regional CDEP services would remain for a bit longer as there is no alternative labour market in the regional areas.

ACTION: Jason / David to look into improving the web site by updating CDEP information, providing a list of titleholders of Lands Trust land and considering relevant links such as EBay and Wikipedia.

b) Update on "Resource Manual for NRM Officers engaging SA Aboriginal communities"

Jason Downs circulated the Draft Resource Manual to ASAC members for review. Jason indicated that either he or Rachel Pfitzner (nee Coates) would ensure that ASAC members not present at the meeting would receive a copy as well.

The Resource Manual has been drafted by Rural Solutions SA on behalf of the Joint Steering Committee. Stage 1 of the contract has been fulfilled which was the desktop study to produce the draft. Stage 2 is the consultation phase.

Jason noted that the writing team thought the manual could be improved by including a visual element (DVD) to capture the emotion behind the writing. Isobelle Campbell, Tom Trevorrow and Karina Lester were all interviewed for the DVD. The DVD is about 15 minutes in length.

Jason or Rachel will contact each ASAC member to discuss the content of the Manual. Jason noted that the high-resolution maps would not be provided until the final version is produced to be cost effective. The feedback that is received on the draft document will go into a report and be provided to the JSC. The aim is to release the Manual in July 2007.

Debra Haseldine suggested that the Manual consider the Anangu perspective on consultation. Jason noted there would be specific consultation for Anangu people.

George Cooley requested that the document be circulated to Aboriginal communities. It is important they know what information is being circulated about them. School children would benefit from receiving this manual too.

Peter said its important that all bureaucrats have access to website. Need to understand the difference between recorded and registered sites. Peter said there is not a whole of funding for education about the Heritage Act. Needs to be more friendly information for communities.

ASAC offered its congratulations to Jason with regard the progress on the Manual.

c) Aboriginal NRM Heritage Agreements

Peter welcomed David Baker and Heidi Crow to the ASAC meeting. Peter noted that it is important that NRM Boards have a bigger understanding of heritage issues. There is a need to build relationships and synergies at the local level.

David opened discussion by providing a one-page summary outlining his talk. David noted that the management of Aboriginal heritage should lie with Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal Heritage Act gives the Government legislative responsibility to record and register Aboriginal Heritage sites. The Heritage Branch is keen to empower Aboriginal people to get involved and to assist them to manage the process.

David indicated there would be consultation over the coming months about how the Heritage Branch will work with Heritage and Native Title committees. Perhaps in the past Heritage has not seen as part of land management. The Heritage Branch is trying to correct this and make the linkages evident.

David clarified the role of his branch. Historically the Heritage Branch has been a filter, standing between parties. We wish to stand next to both parties (Aboriginal representative and landholding representative) and enable engagement to happen.

South Australia has the least knowledge about sites all of Australia. Looking to negotiate with people about getting more knowledge about sites. The Government is providing training support through the Aboriginal Heritage Fund. This fund will assist Aboriginal people getting out on to country to record sites. The fund is not for white people and it's not for wages. Necessary equipment such as cameras and computers with Internet access can be provided which are some real tangible benefits. The Central Database (the electronic form of the Register of Sites) is almost all digitised. We are aiming for each Aboriginal user group to have a local database

that will facilitate access to information. Presently the Aboriginal Heritage Branch tells developers generally where culturally important sites are (without specifying their locations) and then tells them which Aboriginal group they can contact to discuss their plans. David noted that to view a Heritage Card a person would need to seek permission from those that contributed to it, which could be one person, or several.

David indicated that Heritage and Native Title are beginning to work together at the State level with meetings between the State Aboriginal Heritage Committee and the Heritage Sub-committee of Congress. At the local level, there are some 50-odd organisations in SA that are Heritage-related. There is a need for the Heritage Branch to get some rationalisation about whom the government deals with.

Lynette queried about the process in place for unrecorded sites. David responded that anyone could record a site and submit it to the Heritage Branch. Once a site is recorded it can then be registered however registration is a time consuming and expensive process and the extra protection offered from registering a site is only marginal. There is something like 3500-recorded sites that have not been registered. David is keen to promote training opportunities for people to record their sites.

George Cooley suggested we don't give enough thought to current places that Aboriginal people visit. It is important to record and protect historically important sites as well as sites that are used today. Derek supported George and noted some great work has been done in the lower lakes – which are all current use areas. ASAC recommended to the Aboriginal Heritage Branch that they start capturing current Aboriginal use of land. Any review of legislation could help capture this. Need to be relevant today.

Heidi Crow provided a presentation on the Aboriginal Heritage Act. Heidi began by noting that she is the DPC representative on the AW NRM Board and that she reviews the NRM Board regional investment strategies on behalf of the Heritage team.

Heidi indicated her main role is to talk to people about managing heritage Aboriginal Heritage Agreements are legislated through Section 37 of the Act. Currently there is only one agreement for SA, which is Granite Island. It is quite difficult to secure an Aboriginal Heritage Agreement as the land would be protected forever and therefore landowners are reluctant to bind their land in this way. It was noted that this should not deter someone looking into an Aboriginal Heritage Agreement for land that they want protected. If a piece of land is sold it is still bound by the agreement. Three parties are involved in negotiation phase: the Heritage Unit, Aboriginal people and the landowner. There is a public consultation period mandated into the process for applying for a Heritage Agreement.

An Aboriginal Heritage Agreement is a good idea, but they are a hard sell and a lot of hard work. A site conservation plan is something more realistically achievable. These are much more common and training can be provided to help people write a site conservation plan. The management plan discusses the relevant cultural matter and who is going to look after it. The Heritage Branch liaises with the relevant technical people to help implement the site conservation plan (National Parks, Coast and Marine, NRM people etcetera). The Heritage Branch is able to help someone write a plan and, when finished, the plan can be submitted and money accessed for implementing the plan and monitoring the actions.

Under Section 24 of the Heritage Act the Minister has the powers to restrict people entering sites of cultural value. This process includes a negotiation phase Signage and monitoring are critical components to ensure that the land is looked after.

ASAC supported engaging and training Aboriginal people in heritage conservation matters.

David commented that it is important that representative bodies, especially those at senior levels, are assisted to meet with each other. He suggested that a meeting of the ASAC with the State Aboriginal Heritage Committee would be useful and is happy to assist if ASAC wishes.

RECOMMENDATION: The Aboriginal Heritage Branch to look into ways of safeguarding current Aboriginal use of land through the review of the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

ACTION: David Baker to provide David Hanna with structure of the Aboriginal Heritage Branch, Confidentiality Policy and the latest newsletter so they can be circulated to ASAC members.

ACTION: David Hanna to provide Aboriginal Heritage Agreement handout to ASAC members not in attendance at the meeting.

d) ALT engagement of ALT Act with respect to Heritage

John Chester did not attend the meeting so discussion was postponed to the next meeting. Peter resolved to write to ALT as noted in "Business Arising".

e) Process for review of NRM Board Investment Strategies

At this point in the meeting the Chair, Peter Buckskin departed for a meeting with the Minister. Derek Walker assumed the responsibility of Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

David Hanna discussed the request by NRM Council for ASAC members to review the Aboriginal components of the 8 NRM Board Investment Strategies. It was noted that a questionnaire was provided to ASAC members last year and it was agreed that it would be useful to use it again this year. David will contact ASAC members out-of-session regarding which ASAC members will review which Investment Strategies.

ACTION: David Hanna to contact ASAC members regarding review of NRM Board Investment Strategies.

f) Aboriginal representation on NRM related government committees

ASAC members discussed the issue of Aboriginal representation on NRM related government committees (raised by NRM Council with ASAC). NRM Council is keen to provide some advice to the Minister and seeks ASAC's input.

Aboriginal men can speak on some matters while Aboriginal woman can speak on others. With this in mind ASAC suggests that NRM related committees are made aware of this issue in general terms so that they are aware (particularly the Chairperson) that some issues may not be able to be resolved in a meeting without seeking outside advice. Secondly, it is suggested that if a committee is represented by only one Aboriginal person, that person is supported by a delegate of the opposite gender and given the opportunity to seek the advice of this person out-of-session to resolve any relevant matters.

The most important thing is that NRM related committees respect this division of expertise and afford opportunities to seek both male and female advice when required.

ASAC also discussed the induction process to an NRM Committee as being important. New members should have a general understanding and appreciation of the division of expertise between Aboriginal men and women.

ACTION: ASAC advice regarding aboriginal representation on NRM related government committees to be provided to NRM Council via the letter from Peter Buckskin about the outcomes of the ASAC meeting.

g) ASAC Work-plan

NRM Council have requested ASAC prepare a work plan.

ASAC agreed that a work plan to guide the work of the committee would be very useful.

Increasing engagement of Aboriginal people in NRM, particularly by the NRM Boards is one of the key drivers for ASAC. It was agreed that a communication plan would be an important aspect of ASAC's work plan to help in this regard. The communication strategy would include initiatives such as information in language, website, engagement with NRM Boards, NRM Groups and Indigenous Advisory Committees.

The work plan will be drafted out-of-session and presented to ASAC members for endorsement at their May meeting. ASAC would then seek NRM Council approval at the June meeting of Council.

ACTION: David Hanna to work with ASAC members to draft a work plan – for discussion at the May meeting.

6. Other Business

Volunteer Sub-committee

Debra Haseldine gave a summary of the activities of the Volunteer sub-committee. The summary included:

- Membership on the Committee determined by the skills that the members bring.
- The Volunteer Sub-committee has an excellent Chair and good committee members.
- The Sub-committee has produced its first work plan. Debra indicated that she could provide a copy of the work plan to members if they requested it.
- The existing terms of reference of ASAC can be used in conjunction with the Volunteering work plan template to help prepare an ASAC work plan.

The level of caring for community is quite significant in Aboriginal communities. It was also noted that it can be very difficult for an Aboriginal person to commit regularly to attend volunteering events due to distance to travel, family business and personal financial insecurity.

Action: Invite Cecelia Woolford, the Chair of Volunteer Sub-committee, to the May meeting of ASAC.

Action: David Hanna to consider the Volunteer Sub-committee work plan in preparing the ASAC work plan.

7. Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday 8th May 2007.

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

8. Close

The Chairperson closed the meeting at 4.00pm.