LOWER LAKES AND COORONG INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMITTEE – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
4 AUGUST 2011

Minutes of the meeting of the Lower Lakes and Coorong Infrastructure Committee held at the Meningie Bowling Club, on Thursday 4th August 2011, commencing at 7:30pm.

Present: Neil Shillabeer Chairman, L Fischer, M Ousley, C Mason, H Ousley, Cr. A Dawes. Tracy Hill.

In attendance Mick Fischer

Apologies Mayor Roger Strother, Cr. Sharon Bland, Sam Dodd. Bill Henshall

1. Welcome
Chairperson Neil Shillabeer welcomed all present and took the chair.

2. Confirmation of minutes 7th April 2011
Moved H Ousley, Sec. C Mason, that the minutes from the 2nd June 2011 meeting be adopted as a true and correct record. CARRIED

3. Receipt of Correspondence items and Reports
Letters received from; Adrian Pederick MP; Greg Hunt MP; SA Water; Paul Caica (Minister), Barry O’Farrell NSW Premier; Patrick Secker MP; Dan Croucher DFW. Janice Goodwins, DENR.

4. Business Arising
Chair advised letters as requested from last meeting had all been sent with responses as above. No response from Mitch Williams MP; Tony Burke MP; Allan Holmes DENR; Andrew Beale DFW

5. Chairperson’s report
Social Impact case study on Lower Lakes carried out by Dr Jonathan Sobels now available for release. Chairman will circulate via email.

Seawater ecological review is nearly finished and information should be available shortly (refers to the introduction of seawater into the lakes to mitigate acid sulphate soils).

Lower Lakes, Coorong and Murray Mouth Flow requirements research work has been completed and released (for links, see either The Lakes Hub Bulletin or The DENR Community Update from last week). This work was comprehensively peer reviewed by English Scientist Ed Maltby and came up with an extremely high level of credibility.

Modelling is being done by DFW to determine the impacts on the lakes if the barrages were removed, aligned with various flow regimes down river. This will show that the lakes will turn hyper saline very quickly.

Meeting next Monday of Boating destinations group at Meningie Sailing Club.

Chair informed meeting of Dean Brown’s current status/involvement with communities as detailed below, he chairs the following groups;
- Lower Murray River Reference Group.
- Lower Lakes and Coorong Tourism and Environment Group
- MDBA Consultative Banking Group (dealing with implementation of the Basin Plan, includes all Banks across the Basin)
- Technical Advisor to the River Murray Advisory Committee in a voluntary Capacity

6. **Reports / items from Committee members**

**C Mason**
Organised meeting with Ray Najar at Meningie last week. Local landowners attended to hear proposal of siphoning water from the bottom end of Lake Albert into the Coorong. Helped organise South East Drainage Project tour with Minister Caica and other invitees, an NRM initiative held on 14th July.

**A Dawes**
Ray Najar has sent a presentation on his embankment proposal for Lake Alexandrina through to the Lakes Hub.

Meningie Progress Association has planted 10,000 plants in the revegetation program. Still two sites at Narrung to be planted yet.

The interpretive pathway is nearly finished in the Lakeshore Habitat Restoration Project. The Friends of Meningie group will be planting the old croquet court area with natives on the 12th August. The interpretive pillars are soon to be installed.

**H Ousley**
Meningie East landowners struggling with mains water (SA Water) costs. Suggested that pumping from Lake Albert be investigated as an option.

**ACTION:** Harry to check with landowners to establish how many would be genuinely interested in pursuing a pipeline from the lake.

Raised the issue of dredging in the narrows and depositing silt on land. (Letter from Dan Croucher indicated that no silt will be dealt with on land if dredging was carried out)

**M Ousley**
Raised the issue of lake hazards and the response from Janice Goodwins (DENR)

**L Fisher**
Indicated that the response from Janice Goodwins (DENR) still hasn’t clarified the responsibility position surrounding the lake hazards. Who has ownership of the lakebed? Lakeshore parallel fencing has cut off lakebed.

**ACTION:** Chair to revisit ownership responsibilities with DENR.

Final accounts from SA Water for mains water connections unreasonable in payment timeframe.

**ACTION:** Chair to see if extension to seven day payment can be negotiated.

Discussed syphons and channel at bottom end of Lake Albert to Coorong. Needs more information on engineering reports etc.

**ACTION:** Chair to follow up on channel proposal reports, and get copies to committee.

Chairperson indicated that Ray Najar wants support for his project he needs to demonstrate the following:
- Where the money would come from
- Show results of any feasibility study
- Substantiate Ngarrindjeri approval including Native Heritage, Native Title, Native vegetation
- Acceptance by MDBA, DENR, DFW and Crown Lands.
- Coorong Council approval and support
- EPBC compliance and approval including an EIS.

Acknowledged interview done by Mayor with Nance Paxton recently.
Expressed concern regarding de-commissioning of Warrengie monitoring station. General meeting discussion agreed that it should be re-instated because without it, inaccurate salinity levels are purveyed to upstream communities and to the people who are managing flows (i.e., sends the wrong message to everyone).
**ACTION:** Chair to have discussions with DFW. If necessary to be followed up by a letter to DFW.

MOVED H Ousley, Seconded L Fischer, it be recommended to Council that a letter be written to DFW, seeking re-instatement of the Warrengie Monitoring Station, outlining the importance of this station in determining accurate average salinity readings in Lake Albert.

**CARRIED**

**T.Hill**
Reported on interview she did with Channel 10 regarding the need for dredging in the Narrows and the differences in salinity levels between the two lakes. - Went very well.
Indicated that Fisherman are suggesting that Coorong health is improving.

7. **Recommendations to Council**
Moved H Ousley, Seconded L Fischer, it be recommended to Council that a letter be sent to DFW, seeking re-instatement of the Warrengie Monitoring Station outlining the importance of this station in determining accurate average salinity readings in Lake Albert (letter to be withheld until Chair person has discussions with DFW).

**CARRIED**

8. **Next meeting**
Thursday 22nd September 2011 7.30pm at the Bowling Club.

9. **Closure** 9:45pm