LOWER LAKES AND COORONG INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
HELD MENINGIE BOWLING CLUB 2ND DECEMBER 2011@ 1930 HRS

PRESENT: N Shillabeer Chairman, C Mason, A Dawes, R Strother, S Bland, L Fischer, S Dodd, H Ousley, Dr M Kerrigan, M Ousley,

APOLOGIES: John Howard DENR

IN ATTENDANCE: L Leese, M Fischer, B Henschall

2. Confirmation of Minutes 22nd September 2011 Moved to be a true and correct record.

MOVED H Ousley \ C Mason CARRIED

3. BUSINESS ARISING
3.1 Letter re bathymetric survey sent and survey now attended to. Chairman spoke to a report provided by J Howard with Phragmites removal map, these will be re planted elsewhere.
Barge in the area landowners may like to discuss the removal of fence posts/ hazards, at a cost to the farmer. Concern expressed over the significant increase in the reeds since 2008.
Monies originally allocated 5.8billion by Commonwealth towards infrastructure projects. Discussion re fast tracking lodgement of Phase 2 works and a wider scoping study of future works in the Narrows (ref. John Howard report) in an attempt to attract funding which Commonwealth Government is promoting in the 2011 – 12 budget.

MOVED That CDC be requested to: Lobby for Federal funding to rehabilitate the Narrows in this Financial year being 2011-12. H Ousley / Dr M Kerrigan CARRIED

4. CORRESPONDENCE
4.1 Letter tabled from Kelly Jaensch re community engagement.

5. CHAIRMANS REPORT
5.1 Chairman had a briefing in Canberra prior to the release of the Draft Basin plan.
Report tabled.
Concerned that an over reaction to SDL’s may create an acceptance problem by the eastern states
The figures are a starting point for an adaptive plan process. Chairman has a meeting with the Premier SA on 5th December. Overall plan appears to be better than the previous plan.

Hard copies of the Plans will be available at CDC Offices.

Environment: No watering plans drawn up as yet. To be done at a State level. Local input is to happen. Required on an annual basis varying on flows available.

Assessment and review of the Plan in 2015 with necessary changes to be made based on scientific outcomes. The salt export (flushing) of 2 million tonnes annually is a target in the Plan. SDL’s will be adaptable according to 2015 review.

Water accounting periods timing different. Chairman to investigate.

Lakes Albert & Alexandrina not separated, are included in the State’s SDL Resource Area.

Concern expressed that Infrastructure improvement interstate increases the ability to withhold water from unregulated flow, therefore less to come down into SA.

6. REPORTS

S Bland information required for the CDC website last updated sometime ago. MDBA info to go on the website if possible including information request and links.

A Dawes spoke to the Hub report see attached.

C Mason spoke on the SE drains project to the Southern Lagoon. 40GL’s average will take 3 years to complete. Southern Lagoon Pumping plan on hold. RAMSAR task force has been disbanded. Replaced by 2 committees 1 for the Lakes which need to have RAMSAR input.

Lower Murray Reference group disbanded as well, to be covered off on in the above 2 committees yet to commence.

Tauwitcherie Barrage pedestrian access proposal discussed. Meeting with SA Water CEO John Ringham went well resulting in Risk Assessment meeting with Barrage Operations people and risk assessors from SA Water. Latter meeting quite difficult with risk assignment standing in way of proposal’s progress at this point. SA Water, however, have offered the decking of the Barrage which is being replaced as a means of constructing a walkway along the edge of the causeway to the eastern end of the Barrage.

Mayor Strother has requested a cost estimate on track along the Coorong to the causeway, to be done by CDC Works Dept.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 5 POINT PLAN FROM THE Meningie & Narrung Lakes Irrigators Assoc.

Plan has been circulated, fishermen input, Ngarrindjeri input. Not a new concept.

Connection from Lake Albert to Coorong requires serious investigation.
The plan intent is improve the condition of Lake Albert and the Coorong. Request support of the Committee to move it ahead.

MOVED that it be recommended to the CDC that the CDC fully endorses the Meningie Narrung Lakes Irrigators Association 5 point plan for the restoration of Lake Albert. Inclusive of feasibility studies as appropriate. 
MOVED S Dodd / H Ousley CARRIED

7.2 MNLIA AGM meeting at Meningie Bowling on 14th December @1930hrs Karlene Maywald is the guest speaker. All welcome

7.3 Chairman expressed concern over significant changes in the Department for Water causing a loss of experience. Brings into question level of advice to the Minister and Premier.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL
1. MOVED That CDC be requested to Lobby for Federal Funding to rehabilitate the Narrows in this Financial year being 2011-12. H Ousley / Dr M Kerrigan

2. MOVED that it be recommended to Coorong District Council (CDC) that the CDC fully endorses the Meningie Narrung Lakes Irrigators Association 5 Point Plan for the restoration of Lake Albert. Inclusive of feasibility studies as appropriate. 
MOVED S Dodd / H Ousley CARRIED

3. RESOLVED CDC be requested to advertise the next LL&CIC meeting in a 1/4 page ad in the Lakelander inviting those interested in contributing to the discussion on the Draft Plan.

NEXT MEETING 23rd February 2011 full discussion. Follow up meeting in March to work on a submission to the Basin Plan.

MEETING CLOSED 10.25pm
Apologies for not being able to make tomorrow night’s meeting but an aged parent waits for no-one. Below is the update as promised

- The second bathymetric survey of the project area highlighted minimal change in bathymetry or movement of sediment into the "holes" from the first survey.
- It identified some high spots adjacent to the bund area that were a potential navigation hazard (these were within the buoyed exclusion zone). In traveling through the Narrows by boat the rippling effect is very evident.
- A proposal is being prepared for the Commonwealth for the extent of Phase 2 works to remove those high spots so that the channel complies with DTEI requirements.
- At this time it is uncertain that further work to move sediment in the project area would have any impact on water exchange between the lakes i.e as discussed at the last meeting there is no guarantee that spending available funds would be an effective use of those funds.
- The issue of a wider scoping study for the future management of Lake Albert WQ and the Narrows has been raised with the Commonwealth.
- However that study would require Commonwealth funding but needs to wait until a response is received on Phase 2 proposal before it can be progressed (to note that study will include investigation of points 1-3 in Lesley’s 5 point plan).
- Feedback from the community on the proposed extent of Phase 2 works and seeking additional funding for a wider scoping study would be welcomed for incorporation into submission(s) to Commonwealth.

The recent full bathymetric survey has shown sedimentation in some areas of the Narrows and scouring in others compared to 2008 DEM survey. Advice from our GIS Officer is that the coarse resolution in the 2008 DEM compared to the highest resolution of the 2011 survey is the main difference factor. I will be discussing the survey further with Theresa Heneker (DfW) later this week.

We will be trialing the removal of some small patches of phragmites in the Narrows to see if it makes any difference in water exchange. The areas have been identified in consultation with Glen Hill, Ngarrindjeri and DENR ecologists - see attached map. The area is at the Narrung end as it comes out of the first "narrow" section. The phragmites removed will be used in trials on bank stabilisation with plantings between 15 and 100 metres offshore in a couple of selected locations with significant bank erosion. This will be done in conjunction with Ken Strother.

Give me a ring if you need any clarification.

Regards
John
jandhow@bigpond.net.au
Ph 0401 122 546
Lakes Hub Report to Infrastructure Meeting 1/12/11

October
Lou Mawson and I attended the Kids teaching Kids conference in Adelaide to man the DENR Trade stand. This event was an International event with students from as far away as Germany and New Zealand. I felt I actually learnt a bit by attending this event and was disappointed MAS wasn’t in attendance especially when they had the opportunity for sponsorship to attend.

November
I met with Premier Jay Weatherill and Minister Paul Caica at the Pelican Path with Mal Jurgs, Denice Mason and 5 students from MAS. I took the opportunity to raise 3 concerns of the local community;

1. The Lake Albert salinity level and the effect on Lake Albert irrigators.
2. The price of SA Water for livestock watering. The Premier said he was aware of the concerns around Lake Albert for the price of water and I pointed out this was a whole of state issue not just a Lake Albert issue.
3. I also pointed out the lack of good roads to access out Wetlands of International Importance and asked if infrastructure funding could be made available for roads around the Coorong.

I attended the Native Fish Strategy day at Goolwa where I met Rhonda Dickson the CEO of the MDBA. I was able to explain a bit about Lake Albert’s situation but was a little frustrated when I went to point out our situation on a GWLAP map only to find that Lake Albert wasn’t on their map. The Native Fish Strategy is a program which is to run for 50 years which started in about 2004 and its goals are to return native fish stocks to at least 60% of pre European settlement numbers.

Lou Mawson and Robynne Barrett from the Lakes Hub held a snake awareness day at MAS with Venom Supplies. Students from Salt Creek and Raukkan also attended.

The Lakes Hub organised a Native Fish Day at Milang School with students attending from Meningie and Raukkan.

We had a Lakes Hub steering committee meeting at Milang.

I attended a public meeting at Gemini Downs where Glynn Rickets, Mark ?, Clare Manning and Gemma Cunningham updated us on various projects.

Met with John Howard and Theresa Myburgh to talk about the Meningie Fore Shore Habitat Restoration project.

FOM meeting and BBQ on the 12 December 5.00pm at Hub
ATTACHMENT 2 – 5 Point Plan for Lake Albert

LAKE ALBERT – ‘THE CANARY IN THE MINE SHAFT’
Meningie Narrung Lakes Irrigators Association...... 09/11/2011

The floods have revitalised the river, the wetlands have flushed, communities and economies are recovering, throughout the Murray Darling Basin.

But not so, Lake Albert at the very end of the River Murray system.

Together with the lack of flows and the bunding off of Lake Albert from the river proper, Lake Albert now enters a phase of another potential environmental disaster. Lake Albert is regarded as a terminal lake, it only has one inlet-outlet, the Narrung Narrows.

The Narrung Narrows have been congested with silt following the construction of a Causeway in 1960, which effectively blocked off natural flow between the two lakes by half. This Causeway not only blocked off the natural flow, but it caused siltation to occur in the Narrung Narrows and increased reed growth, which in turn created a clogging effect restricting natural flow.

The Bund was constructed in 2008 blocking off all natural flows into the lake. Due to the subsequent and added siltation and the fact that Lake Albert went below sea level, the salinity in the lake increased and has remained high. The salinity levels in Lake Albert are at present approximately 22 times more saline than water in Lake Alexandrina.

The MNLIA have put together a 5 point Plan to bring about the recovery of Lake Albert and in turn the Coorong.

1 Remove the Causeway
2 Remove the Bund in total
3 Dredge the Narrung Narrows
4 A channel and/or a pipeline at the southern end of Lake Albert to the Coorong.
5 Return natural flows to the southern end of the Coorong.

These 5 points to be administered as one total project.

The MDBasin water ways are already totally engineered and it is highly probable that another engineering feat will be the only thing to save the southern end.

We ask that a feasibility study be looked into the construction of a channel and/or pipeline at the southern end of Lake Albert.

It is anticipated that this would in conjunction with the first 3 points encourage a flow through of the lake and add ‘fresher’ water into the Coorong. No extra water would be required other than that that is agreed with the Murray Darling Basin as it would create another outlet and at the same time allow Lake Albert to flush and put fresher water into the Northern Lagoon of the Coorong.

We ask that you look seriously into the above proposal.

Bill Henshall: Chairman.. Meningie Narrung Lakes Association 0885754220
Lesley Fischer: Secretary..Meningie Narrung Lakes Association 0885754214
**Draft Basin Plan**

Having an opportunity to be briefed by MDBA last week, I now feel more comfortable with most of the Plan. The Legislative Document has been written in relatively simple terms (for a legal document) and whilst the Document itself is principally the framework of the plan we do need to seek out the background information in support of the Plan’s content.

The reasoning for the change in the SDL target from 3000GLs – 4000GLs down to 2750GLs is explained as follows: The original environmental watering requirements were modelled on “end of river system flows” and failed to produce an efficient and accurate result in the environmental watering regime for the Basin. This was replaced by hydrological modelling which demonstrated a much more efficient regime, having the ability to use less water to achieve the same outcomes. This modelling showed improved connectivity and timing in watering events, enabling multiple sites to be picked up in the same event, enabled better evaluation and monitoring to be achieved and only required the addition of extra water to be added to environmental watering flows on the odd occasion (9 years out of the last 114) to achieve end of river flows at the Barrages when greater flushing needs prevailed.

Unfortunately the Basin Plan does not yet have in place an “Environmental Watering Plan”. This will be the responsibility of the States to develop, using the outcomes of the Environmental Water Requirements Modelling as a guide. In this respect I believe the Environmental Water holder (CEWH) is way behind the eight ball in not presenting an explanation of where recovered water will be used now that the Basin Plan is released. The upside to this is that communities will get to have a say in the development of watering plans in their regions.

There has been a lot of speculation surrounding SDL’s categorisation of “local reduction” (minimum reduction required within each SDL resource area to satisfy local environmental needs) and “shared reduction” (further reduction required to satisfy the environmental needs of the Murray and Darling Rivers and is contributed to by areas sufficiently connected to these large rivers). Recovery of the shared reduction is something SA needs to be vigilant about, because of our past efficiencies this water should come mainly from NSW.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water obtained for environment prior to 2009</td>
<td>823GL’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra required by Basin Plan</td>
<td>2750GL’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water recovered since 2009</td>
<td>1068GL’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water to be recovered from NVIRP 2</td>
<td>214GL’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water still to be sourced by 2019</td>
<td>1468GL’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total water to the environment by 2019</td>
<td>3573GL’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Whilst 2750GL’s at first glance seems a little inadequate the total water accumulated is up in the range sought by many environmental groups. The argument between too much and not enough seems to be evenly balanced, maybe this suggests they have it about right.
I believe we need to use the consultation period to offer constructive critique by way of submission in an effort to achieve minimum impact on SA, however, if we push for too much then the eastern states will withdraw and the plan will fail. Let’s make sure at the very least the Plan gets started and if it is to be a truly adaptive process then the outcomes will result from appropriate adjustment with assessment, monitoring and the review in 2015 and beyond.

I also believe at this stage that a State legal challenge would be adding “fuel to the fire” in determining whether the eastern states accept or dump the current draft.

Points of observation:

- SA not rewarded sufficiently for improved efficiency in water delivery and use since cap.
- An average salinity target of 1000EC or less for Lake Alexandrina needs to be added to the targets already set for Lock 7, Morgan and Murray Bridge.
- SA BDL of 665GL is average usage, should be 750GL which is consumptive use, would improve our SDL.
- SDL compliance will allow a 20% tolerance on a cumulative basis calculated on annual under and over cumulative accounting.
- When the new “Register of Take” begins in 2019 all existing caps disappear. (SDL compliance starts from zero)
- The adaptive process with assessment and revue in 2015 will inform on infrastructure efficiency recovery volumes, but will struggle to inform on buyback unless we have very low flows or drought.
- Socio-economic modelling does not reflect the full “flow on” effects of employment loss and doesn’t factor in low commodity prices when considering community impacts. (can’t blame water for all economic downturn)
- The salt load target is the discharge a minimum of 2 million tonnes of salt from the river to the ocean annually.
- The plan heavily backs water allocation reliability. State or water resource plan areas must develop Water Allocation Plans accordingly. (The Goyder Report actually shows a decline in reliability under the new plan)
- Water Resource Plans must not compromise priority environmental assets or ecosystem functions. (Should help E-water reliability)
- Modelling of Environmental needs under the hydrological Indicator Site method builds on environmental demands from the top of the system down.
- Hydrological Indicator Site modelling assesses and monitors with gauges in each reach of the river. There needs to be more gauge points in the reach below lock 1 to achieve greater accuracy in water accountability.
- Environmental Watering Plans are required to be submitted by the state to the Authority prior to the commencement of each water year.
- Environmental Water has the last priority when it comes to river channel constraints to delivery.

Neil Shillabeer