



LAKE EYRE BASIN MINISTERIAL FORUM

Community Advisory Committee

MEETING No. 8 Adelaide Thursday 13th October 2005

AND

Joint Community Advisory Committee/Scientific Advisory Panel

MEETING No. 4 Adelaide Thursday 13th October 2005

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

LEB Rivers Assessment

The Ministerial Forum has approved commencement of the second phase of the Rivers Assessment including on-ground pilot projects such as floodplain salinity mapping methods and waterbird breeding assessment in the Basin.

Ms Amy George will be appointed for twelve months as full-time Project Officer, with responsibility for progressing the Rivers Assessment work. She will be located within the SA Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation in Adelaide.

Plans will now begin for immediate monitoring work and pilot studies.

LEB Social and Economic Review project

The 3-year project, funded under the National Competitive Component of the Natural Heritage Trust, is entitled:

‘People, communities and economies of the Lake Eyre Basin—Their characteristics and trends, and the roles of their institutions in sustainable natural resource management in the Basin.’

It will parallel the LEB Rivers Assessment, and will lay foundations for monitoring future social and institutional trends in the Basin. The project will focus on community/government/ industry interactions, and will be based on case studies, including Indigenous case studies.

As well as consulting widely in the Basin, the project will offer some community members a formal role in project implementation. A funding contract is being compiled and project planning meetings have begun.

2006 Biennial LEB Conference

The CAC and SAP have endorsed the current plans of the Conference Steering Committee, including the purposes of the conference and suggested sessions. The focus of the conference will be on local Basin issues, engaging the Basin community and attracting local Basin attendees and delegates. Several international speakers will be sought to provide comparative case studies of similar arrangements or similar environments overseas. The conference will not be an ‘International Conference’, rather a local conference with some international input to provide context and comparison.

A location has yet to be determined. Transport limitations in and out of Coober Pedy make Port Augusta, Longreach or Alice Springs potentially better options. SAP members suggest that the conference should be held within the Basin.

LEB Agreement Web Site

The Lake Eyre Basin Agreement web site (www.lebmf.gov.au) will be launched in the coming weeks. It describes the LEB Agreement and associated arrangements, the roles of the Ministerial Forum, the Community Advisory Committee and Scientific Advisory Panel, a brief overview of the natural and cultural heritage values of the Basin, and the background to the LEB process and LEB Agreement. The site will host PDF copies of all publications under the LEB Agreement, including:

- the LEB Agreement and Schedules;
- meeting outcomes, newsletters, media releases, procedures, plans and reports,
- LEB conference proceedings

The site includes brief biographies and contact details for all CAC members, brief biographies for all SAP members, and links to web sites for related organisations and groups in the Basin.

The site also includes an automated facility for email subscriptions to receive updates and information, and will contain a photo gallery of people and places in the Lake Eyre Basin.

Australian Government review of regional NRM delivery arrangements

The National NHT Board has established a small Ministerial Reference Group to review regional NRM delivery arrangements in Australia. They will consult key regional, state and national stakeholders, and seek advice on strengths and weaknesses of regional delivery arrangements, in order to improve NRM delivery and enhance regional arrangements. The Reference Group will report by January 2006.

The Australian Department of Environment and Heritage have advised the Reference Group that it would be beneficial to meet with the LEB CAC and with the relevant regional groups within the Lake Eyre Basin.

Strategies under the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement

The Ministerial Forum at its 4th meeting on 14th October agreed to implement twelve priority strategies under the LEB Agreement as recommended by the Jurisdictions, the CAC and the SAP (and grouped by the CAC into 7 key strategies). Government officials will begin to plan the implementation of these strategies in the coming weeks, and will keep the CAC and SAP informed of progress. Implementation of the strategies will be closely tied to development of an Operational Plan for the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement.

The CAC will re-address progress on the strategies during and after compilation of the LEB Operational Plan.

Georgina Diamantina Draft Resource Operations Plan

The Georgina Diamantina Draft ROP is available for public comment until Friday 16th December 2005. The Qld Department of Natural Resources and Mines urges all interested people to submit comments on the draft.

Rob Palmer is compiling a CAC submission on the draft, from members' comments. CAC members to have their comments to Rob within the next few weeks.

Sustainable Floodplain Communities Association

A national Floodplain Association is to be formed following the Dubbo conference of the Sustainable Floodplain Communities Association in September. The new Association will lobby for a number of reforms including protection of natural river flows, realistic water pricing to reflect real costs, a moratorium on future irrigation affecting floodplains, and recognition of graziers rights to water.

Once the new national group is formed and its recommendations are formally proposed, the CAC will further discuss this initiative and its potential relevance to the Lake Eyre Basin.

Aboriginal consultation and involvement

The Ministerial Forum at its 4th meeting on 14th October agreed to increase the Indigenous representation on the CAC to include up to 2 Indigenous members per State/Territory. Indigenous communities and groups in the Basin will be consulted about nominations to fill the extra four Indigenous positions on the CAC.

The Ministers also approved funding for further work to engage Aboriginal people in the LEB Agreement. This includes funding for an Aboriginal consultation project in the Basin in 2006, and for the second Lake Eyre Basin Aboriginal Forum, likely to be held at Mount Searle, SA, in late 2006 before the LEB biennial conference. Planning for these two project will commence immediately.

Outback Heritage Tourism

Following completion of the Lake Eyre Basin Heritage Tourism project, some progress has been made by Joc Schmiechen and Desert Channels Queensland in assisting Queensland local governments in the Basin to collectively address shared tourism issues such as consistent waste disposal practices and guidelines for tourists.

Key recommendations of the Lake Eyre Basin Heritage Tourism project have been incorporated in a broader project for cross-border development of Outback Tourism in Australia, run by Desert Knowledge Australia. A draft report for the Outback Tourism project is available for comment until 24 October. A copy is available at:

http://www.desertknowledge.com.au/dka/index.cfm?attributes.fuseaction=national_outback

Joint meeting with Great Artesian Basin Coordinating Committee April 2006

The LEB CAC will proceed with arrangements for a joint meeting in Alice Springs with the GABCC and regional NRM Group representatives in April 2006, as proposed recently by the GABCC Facilitator.

Lake Eyre Basin Tertiary Scholarship

The CAC will further investigate possibilities and options for establishing a Lake Eyre Basin Tertiary Scholarship. Potential includes assistance for undergraduate degrees, postgraduate research, cadetships, joint/collaborative funding through linkage grants, and formal mentoring by CAC and SAP members. Progress in this investigation to be reported at the next CAC meeting.