Namoi Catchment Management Authority

MINUTES

MEETING NUMBER 30

Riverside Room, Crossing Theatre, Narrabri

23 April 2007
Namoi CMA
Minutes - Meeting Number 30
23 April 2007
Riverside Room, Crossing Theatre
Narrabri

Time: Meeting commenced at 10:20am

Present: Jim McDonald, Brian Tomalin, George Paul, Jeff Austin, Heather Ranclaud, Bruce Brown (GM), Matthew Davidson (OM), Sally Egan (Acting SPM), Samantha Moss (BM), Anne Ferguson (PRO)

Chairs Welcome

Jim McDonald welcomed CMA Board Members and staff.

Pecuniary Interest Register tabled.

1.0 Apologies

Bob Hudson, Ed Colless

2.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (26/03/07)

2.1 Approval of Minutes

- Resolution 30.1

That the minutes from NCMA Board Meeting 29 (26/3/07) be accepted and placed on NCMA website subject to removal of last sentence from paragraph 1 of Item 10.0. Carried

2.2 Updated Actions

Action 18.1

Tamworth RLPB’s application for NCMA funding ongoing.

Brief discussion took place on NCMA’s preference to meet milestone targets with their own investment funds prior to take up of additional federal government funding.

Further discussion regarding need for more flexible management targets that facilitate the speedy movement of funds given external impacts such as drought.

- Action 30.1

OM to forward a current copy of investment performance information to AG (Mike Lee and Mary Colreavy).

Action 21.6

Tamworth Office Rental Agreement signed. Further discussion regarding floor space availability and/or possibility of relocation in Tamworth.

Action 29.2

Implementation Strategy forwarded to EC members. CC (Engagement) currently doing a re-write.
• Resolution 30.2

That the NCMA Board formally appoint Everingham Solomon as NCMA’s Solicitors. Carried

Action 29.21

Paper titled “Progressing the Native Vegetation Management System” (Version 2) still to be forwarded to Minister by Chair of Chairs Native Vegetation Committee.

3.0 Correspondence (17/3/07 – 13/4/07)

Brief discussion took place on letter received (12/4/07) requesting supporting documentation behind NCMA Zone 5 ASGE recommendation.

GM advised that the Draft Tamworth Regional Development Strategy document forwarded by TRC is being reviewed by NCMA’s LG Officer and SPM. Members noted the need for TRC to take into account NCMA’s CAP.

Discussion took place on letter received from Minister Macdonald (10/4/07) regarding re-appointment of current Board Members.

• Action 30.2

PRO to organise EOI for future NCMA Board Members. Advertising to commence 7/5/07 and run for 3 weeks with all responses directed to the Chair.

4.0 Financials

4.1 MTD, YTD P/L and Balance Sheet

BM provided a brief overview of recurrent and investment financials.

4.2 Investment Budget to Actuals

BM spoke to a previously circulated report outlining investment cash flow as at March 2007.

Brief discussion took place on investment expenditure and variance between figures presented by BM and OM.

• Action 30.3

BM to provide a summary of investment expenditure at the end of the cash flow report, showing how much of the residual to be spent is made up of operations, strategic planning or staff salaries.

BM advised that the F’08 recurrent budget should be finalised in the next few weeks.

4.3 Finance & Audit Committee

F&A Chair noted that the monthly cash flow variances should read “for the month of” rather than “as at”.

Brief discussion took place regarding revised Deloittes Top 10 Risks and GM’s comments.

• Action 30.4

EA to email Board Members revised Top 10 Risk Assessment document.
• Action 30.5

NCMA OH&S manual to be revised in line with current legislative requirements.

Discussion took place on Environmental Trust Deed currently being drafted by Everingham Solomon Solicitors and the inclusion of the objects/purpose of the Trust.

F&A Chair noted that an Everingham Solomon Partner would be the Settlor of the Trust. F&A Chair to communicate direct with Everingham Solomon.

• Action 30.6

F&A Committee Chair & BM to table revised Environmental Trust Deed at May F&A Committee/Board Meetings.

• Action 30.7

BM to circulate F&A Committee minutes to the full Board.

Brief discussion took place regarding the need to compile an information package (including Risk Assessment & OH&S documentation) for future Board Members.

• Action 30.8

BM to put together an information pack for future Board Members by June Board Meeting.

5.0 Engagement Committee

EC Chair welcomed Sally Egan, CC (Engagement) and provided an overview of the EC meeting held on 20/4/07.

• Action 30.9

CC (Engagement) to circulate Engagement Committee Minutes to all Board Members.

EC Chair advised that the CC (Engagement) is currently revising the Implementation Plan.

• Action 30.10

CC (Engagement) to provide revised Implementation Plan to May EC meeting.

EC Chair advised that an update on the benchmarking study should be available for the May Board Meeting. Discussion/workshopping of “key messages” to be deferred until benchmarking study is completed.

EC Chair noted the opportunity for NCMA to participate in northern inland NSW CSix carbon endurance race to be held in May 2008. Further information can be obtained from the website www.csix.com.au.

• Action 30.11

EC Chair to forward email from Jack Richie, Regional Development Manager, Art Northwest to GM in relation to indigenous cultural matters.

GM advised that he is interested in conducting a carbon audit of NCMA activities utilising a specialist consultant.
6.0 Chair’s Report

Chair spoke to a previously circulated report and noted the success of the National NRM Forum held recently in Brisbane which was attended by representatives of 56 regional NRM entities.

Discussion took place on consequences of CMAs voluntarily giving up investment funds prior to December 2007. Chair noted NSW CMAs have obtained additional funding for Market Based Instruments Program from part of the funding that Western CMA was giving up.

GM noted that NCMA had submitted all final reports for each investment funding stream.

- **Action 30.12**

  Jeff Austin to represent NCMA Chair at Chairs Council in Sydney on 24/5/07.

Chair noted complimentary comments on NCMA performance received at recent NSW Farmers Zone 1 Conference in Moree.

7.0 General Manager’s Report

GM spoke to a previously circulated report and highlighted ongoing ASGE taxation issues.

GM advised that a formal decision regarding CDF has not yet been made, but he is optimistic that NCMA’s applications would be approved.

8.0 Discussions with Namoi Water Board

NCMA Chair welcomed Namoi Water Board Members.

Broad discussion then proceeded on AG’s MDB Water Plan, future role of CMAs on water issues/policies, post election NSW CMA reporting lines and NCMA/Cotton Communities CRC scientific studies.

NW CEO stated that NW’s preferred position was that NCMA was a decentralised decision maker with statutory powers on water matters. NW indicated their concern if NCMA was perceived solely as a funding entity especially given its Catchment knowledge.

NCMA Chair indicated (in response to a question) that NSW CMA reporting lines would become clearer later in the current week.

Significant discussion occurred on NCMA’s future role with regard to environmental water.

NCMA Chair indicated that given AG’s recently announced MDB Plan that NCMA is seeking a meeting with Minister Turnbull or staff members of his office.

NW CEO commented on WSPs and the need for CMAs to be involved in the 5 year review process. Brief discussion also took place on WSP processes for both the Peel and Cockburn Valleys.

NCMA GM noted the availability of funding for on farm water efficiency projects.

NW CEO expressed some irrigator concerns on some of the scientific studies currently being undertaken by NCMA/Cotton CRC and the need for a partnership approach incorporating NW.

- **Action 30.13**

  GM to arrange meeting between Cotton CRC, Namoi Water and NCMA to discuss scientific studies and the role of scientific contractors.
9.0 Strategic Planning/Activities Report

Acting SPM spoke to a previously circulated report and advised that applications for the Regional Facilitator position have been received.

Acting SPM noted that the IS is still awaiting sign off by the Minister.

Acting SPM spoke to a CIE report on “State of Landcare Groups in Namoi Catchment”. She advised that the report indicated that only a few Landcare Groups appear to be active across the Namoi Catchment.

- Action 30.14

EA to email CIE report “State of Landcare Groups in the Namoi Catchment” to Board Members.

Acting SPM advised that the “Plain English Guide to the CAP” is being revised.

Brief discussion occurred on NCMA Scenario Planning positioning and the Namoi 2030 Project.

Acting SPM advised that SPM would provide update on Strategic Planning investment expenditure at May Board Meeting.

9.1 NAAC Report

Update on NAAC activities to be provided at May Board Meeting.

9.2 URS Water Papers

Discussion took place on the 3 previously circulated URS Water Papers.

- Resolution 30.3

  Paper I – “Principles & Decision Making on Water Matters”

  That the Board confirms the principles for decision making in water management, adopts the behaviours identified for future decision making under the principles and notes the scope of its decision making on water matters.  

  Carried

- Resolution 30.4

  Paper II “Major Development Proposals”

  That the Board notes the background information provided on major development proposals and endorses the development of a process for CMA engagement on such proposals.  

  Carried

GM advised that Paper III was in draft form only.

Action 30.15

SPM to liaise with URS to finalise Paper III prior to May Board Meeting.
• Resolution 30.5

*Paper III “Cap on Water Extraction”*

That the Board notes the background information on the Cap and endorses further investigation of the potential impacts of changed water management arrangements on the Cap and is regularly informed of any changes.

Carried

Brief discussion regarding second recommendation for “Cap on Water Extraction” report. Chair advised that there are currently groundwater zone caps in place but not an overarching valley groundwater cap.

• Action 30.16

GM to write to Caroona Coal Action Group inviting them to the June Board Meeting.

10.0 Investment/Operations Report

OM spoke to a previously circulated report and advised that the “Investment Status per WBS Element” report does not include 03/04 activities.

OM advised he is currently seeking EOI for Evergraze trial sites to demonstrate pasture BMP. This project will cost in the vicinity of $200,000.

OM advised a good response has been received in relation to Property Management Planning with 79% of June 2008 target met.

OM noted that he was optimistic that all Operations investment funding would be contracted by 30/6/07.

The Board thanked OM and his staff for their efforts in getting the quantity of investment funds “on the ground”.

11.0 Native Vegetation/PVP Operations Update

CC (Nat Veg) advised that no queries have been received in relation to Casuarina regrowth in creek beds. This matter will be progressed following completion of negotiations with Walgett Cluster Group.

CC (Nat Veg) advised that the CO, PVP & Projects, Tamworth now has Level 2 accreditation which has relieved some of the PVP backlog pressures. He also noted that Adam Downey has recently been appointed to the Nat. Veg. staff and has commenced training.

CC (Nat Veg) noted that no response has been received to date from the PVP Applicant XXX. CO, PVP & Projects, Tamworth to visit applicant’s property in May.

11.1 Walgett Cluster Update

Broad discussion took place on positioning paper tabled by CC (Nat Veg) relating to the current positioning of NCMA and Walgett Cluster Group.

• Resolution 30.6

1. That NCMA appoint an independent mediator following discussions with Walgett Cluster Group to assist in negotiating an outcome.
2. GM, OM supported by CC (Nat Veg) to represent NCMA in negotiations with Walgett Cluster Group.
Further discussion took place on possible re-wording of positioning paper.

- **Action 30.17**
  
  CC (Nat Veg) to update positioning paper column headings to read “CMA Guidelines” and “Groups Opening Position”.

- **Action 30.18**
  
  Board Members to email Brian Tomalin with any comments relating to the positioning paper.

- **Action 30.19**
  
  CC (Nat Veg) to provide a report to next Board Meeting following negotiations between NCMA and the Walgett Cluster Group.

12.0 **PRO Report**

PRO advised advertising on TV for the Conservation Rewards Program is underway with EOI open until 11/5/07. Normal advertising to recommence from 12/5/07.

PRO noted that the “Bugger the Drought” evening held in Gunnedah on 30/3/07 was very successful and generated great feedback and media coverage.

PRO stated that nominations for the Regional Landcare Awards close 4/5/07. Nomination forms and judging criteria can be found on the NCMA website.

13.0 **General Business**

Nil

14.0 **Next Board Meeting Date**

Next Board Meeting to be held in NCMA Board Room, Gunnedah on Monday, 28 May 2007.

Meeting closed at: 3:50pm

___________________________  ______________________ ______
Jim McDonald   Bruce Brown
Chair Namoi CMA    GM Namoi CMA
# RESOLUTIONS
Meeting Number 30

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