

MINUTES

MEETING HELD
5:30PM WEDNESDAY, 27 MARCH 2019



MEMBERS PRESENT	
Cr Marianne Saliba (SCC) Chair	Col Wilton (Community Rep)
Cr Peter Moran (SCC)	Carla Ganassin (Fisheries)
Cr Cameron Walters (WCC)	Brian Jones (Scientific Advisor)
Cr Dom Figliomeni (WCC)	John Davey (Community Rep)
Cr Cath Blakey (WCC)	Annie Marlow (Community Rep)
Sharralyn Robinson (WCC ARG Aboriginal Community Rep)	Danny Wiecek (OEH)
Graham Towers (DPE)	Andrew Monk (RMS)
Dr Kerrylee Rogers (Scientific Advisor)	

IN ATTENDANCE	
Kristy Blackburn (WCC & SCC)	Troy Gaston (UON)
Chris Stewart (WCC)	Carl Hopley (WCC)
Mike Dowd (WCC)	Renee Winsor (WCC)
Tuesday Heather (SCC)	Jessica Faustini (WCC)

1 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Committee members and thanked them for their attendance.

2 APOLOGIES – Apologies were received and accepted on behalf of Cr Nathan Cattell, Wayne Cook, Ben Tax, Jason Carson, and Paul Knight.

3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Chair acknowledged the traditional owners of the Land.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5 December 2018

Recommendation: The minutes of the previous Lake Illawarra Estuary Management Committee meeting held on 5 December 2018 be endorsed:

MOVED: Cr Peter Moran

SECONDED: Col Wilton

ALL IN FAVOUR

6 TIDAL INUNDATION MODELLING – PRESENTATION – DANNY WEICEK

Danny Wiecek, Office of Environment and Heritage reported on the recent Lake Illawarra tidal inundation modelling project conducted by UOW. The modelling provides better information about tidal inundation and separates it from inundation due to storm surges. Tidal inundation will occur due to the permanent opening as well as SLR. This modelling was essential for meeting the requirements of the new Coastal Management Manual. Staff from local and state government met on February 12 2019 to review the findings and discuss the consequences of SLR to the Lake and surrounding assets. The information collected has been used to inform the Draft CMP. Danny

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answered a question on how SLR will change the geomorphology of the Lake, responding that it may in circumstances especially where there is not suitable vegetation cover

7 RESPONSE TO COCKLE COLLECTION CONCERNS IN LAKE ILLAWARRA – PRESENTATION – CARLA GANASSIN

Carla Ganassin, Dept of Fisheries provided information to the committee on the issue of cockle collecting in Lake Illawarra and surrounds. Over the past five years there has been an increase in cockle collection for food, where historically they have been collected for bait purposes only.

Cockles are found all through the Lake; they are broadcast spawners and filter feeders. They have specific ecosystem needs and live in seagrass for part of their lifecycle and muddy substrate of a certain depth for the rest. The current population of cockles in Lake Illawarra is unknown.

Collection is managed under the Fisheries Management Act, and regulations stipulate a bag limit of 50 per person per day. Fisheries use compliance plans to manage the collection across the region. The past season Fisheries inspected 886 people, of which 70% were keeping to bag limits. 188 offences were recorded, with 123 warnings issued. Two people were caught with 783 cockles and they will be charged according to the compliance plan. A question was asked regarding how many people reoffend, which was unknown at this stage. It was also mentioned that the fine amounts seem too low, and the message isn't getting out there. Carla responded that the fines are determined by the Act and they do increase for reoffenders. The message is being spread using signage at popular collecting areas and messages on community radio.

There is a growing trend of selling cockles on Facebook. This is being monitored by Fisheries and four people have been prosecuted as a result. They face large fines and possible incarceration.

In order to combat this issue Fisheries suggests education is needed, and provided pamphlets for each Council to distribute. Little is known about the distribution of cockles, and Fisheries have plans to develop a harvest strategy however cockles are not a high priority species so this may not be developed immediately.

Due to the over collection of cockles being in the public eye, the PMT met with Fisheries to negotiate for some actions to be included in the Draft CMP to address the issue. New actions include advocating for further studies on cockles to be completed and adding "hand gathering" to the action EV2 to prevent disturbance of seagrass. A question was raised regarding if people are disturbing seagrass while collecting, would it be a good idea to stop making new parks on the foreshore to limit access? Kristy mentioned that there is an action in the CMP that relates to restricting access to sensitive environments. This action includes an education program, signage, bollards, etc, and there is mapping showing which areas should be protected.

Karla answered a question regarding whether we have an understanding of the health impacts of consuming cockles from Lake Illawarra. Fisheries are not aware of any health impacts from Lake Illawarra at this stage. Commercial collectors must have cockles tested if they wish to gain a licence, however there have been not commercial licences issued in Lake Illawarra for some time. Karla also

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answered a question relating to Lake closure to combat the cockle collecting, Fisheries will start by lowering bag limits as a first step until more scientific information is found.

A comment was made that there is research around cockles in Lake Macquarie that could be looked into. The CMP deals with restoring ecosystems and habitats around the Lake which will indirectly benefit cockle population.

8 FISHERIES HABITAT LINKAGES PROJECT– PRESENTATION – DR TROY GASTON

Dr Troy Gaston, Senior Lecturer in Environmental Science at the University of Newcastle presented methodology and results on his investigation into key fisheries species and Lake Illawarra habitats.

This research aims to quantify how organisms use the estuary. The purpose of the study is to rank these habitats in importance from an organism perspective. This will allow for a targeted approach to rehabilitation/ protection efforts across the catchment.

The methodology used focused on carbon and nitrogen isotopes. Five fish, three crustaceans were collected from four areas around the Lake (Mullet Creek, Macquarie Rivulet, the entrance and the centre) and tested to establish their primary source of food. Food sources included mangroves, seagrass, saltmarsh, fine benthic organic matter etc. A question was asked regarding the separation of epiphytes growing on seagrass and seagrass itself and Troy informed the committee that they were measured as a separate source.

Prawns (School and Eastern King) were collected in nine locations and assigned a location by food source.

It was found in other estuaries that saltmarsh may be disproportionately important to fish species. The results from Lake Illawarra are expected in the next few weeks and after they are received it will be possible to put a dollar value on each habitat in relation to fisheries value.

A question regarding the availability of this information, if it was publicly available and could it be exploited by fishers? The information is publicly available but it is difficult to be exploited by fishers as the channels are less than a metre deep and fishers generally get them on the way out.

It was commented that Lake Illawarra is not a mature estuary so you may find differing results from the other studies conducted. Possibly seagrass will be more important in this system. Also there is a danger in assigning a dollar value to a habitat as it only considers its value in relation to fishing and not other services provided. This was noted.

9 CORRESPONDENCE IN AND OUT

N/A

10 REZONING APPLICATIONS – LAKE CATCHMENT AND FORESHORE WCC AND SCC

Chris Stewart, Manager City Strategy spoke to the WCC report. No report was received from SCC.

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11 MAJOR CAPITAL WORKS: COUNCIL-BASED UPDATE

Mike Dowd, Manager Infrastructure Strategy & Planning, WCC spoke to the WCC report, noting that they are developing a REF that addresses EPA concerns and that WCC would be working with OEH and the EPA to address these. He stated that key stakeholders, including the LIEMC will be consulted on the projects outcomes. It is expected progress will be delayed 6 – 12 months. He responded to a question as to whether the entrance study will deliver any solutions or actions, saying that this study shows what is happening in the entrance and a second phase study will deliver actions. In the interim works will continue to address immediate pressures. Also mentioned was the Windang boat ramp will be completed within the next few weeks and Fowlers Road bridge is running ahead of schedule. The draft City Works program will be on exhibition in April and committee members are invited to provide comment. An around the lake cycleway feasibility and constraints study has been proposed in the 19/20 -20/21 budget in conjunction with SCC.

Tuesday Heather, Environment Manager, SCC spoke to the SCC report. A question regarding whether the community, in particular kayak/canoe users, are being consulted in the design of the Skiway Park launch area will be referred to relevant staff. A question was asked about how the upgrades were being funded, and it was reported that grant funding along with insurance claim money are being used. The first stage of upgrades is complete and the Native Title has been resolved.

12 LAKE ILLAWARRA OFFICER REPORT

- **LIEMC** – Sydney Water has advised they will no longer be a member of the LIEMC. They cannot commit to attending meeting but will still be involved in signing off on actions in the CMP. Karla Ganassin will replace Jillian Reynolds as Fisheries Rep on the committee.
- **Update on CMP** – The latest draft of the CMP is due by the end of the week. All documents will be delivered to committee members by April 9 and they will have five weeks to review before a workshop is held to enable feedback on May 1.
- **Items in the press** – LIEMC was mentioned a few times, with some calls being made to bring back a single body to look after the Lake.
- **Land ownership issues:** Remains unchanged. The NSW Coastal Council is concerned about the complicated nature of asset ownership around the Lake. This has led to a new action in the CMP to allow for easier management of these assets.
- **Lake Illawarra Fund** - There is funding available in the Lake Illawarra Budget which has previously been used to leverage grant applications. The PMT are developing guidelines to be used for funding internal projects with this budget.
- **Shared Pathway** – SCC is developing an Indigenous interpretive walk and has extended an invitation to WCC to extend it further around the Lake.
- **Walk Updates** - Presentation made by Jessica Faustini on the completion of walks around the whole Lake. The next walk will be starting the process again from Primbee on April 4.

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13 COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES (ROUND TABLE)

John Davey asked for an update on works/land ownership at Oaklands Estate, saying that an extra fence has been put up along the path that was thought to be public. Kristy provided an update from Ben Tax, Crown Lands saying that phase one and two of the works are complete but there has been a wash out and they are seeking funding to complete phase three. The fences will remain up until works are finished. The land is public but the fence is there to restrict access until the area is safe.

Cr Dom Figliomeni highlighted community concern regarding the state of Dix's Wharf. It is considered to have historic value and needs to be maintained. An email from Crown Lands states they will be conducting a review of their assets and that they provide maintenance when complaints are made.

Col Wilton mentioned there are large stingrays in the swimming area at Skiway Park which makes people reluctant to swim. Carla from Fisheries said that in other places the local zoo or aquarium may remove them.

Kristy Blackburn provided an update of works at Judbooley Parade on behalf of Crown lands. They have completed investigations into indigenous issues and will be submitting a DA to Council to demolish.

Recommendation: The presentations provided at items 6, 7 and 8 and the reports presented at items 10, 11 and 12 are noted as received by the Committee as a whole.

MOVED: Cr Peter Moran

SECONDED: Col Wilton

ALL IN FAVOUR

14 OTHER BUSINESS

N/A

15 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be in the form of a workshop to facilitate the delivery of comments on the Draft CMP. This workshop will be run by BMT and be held at Shellharbour. The meeting will begin at 5pm on May 1 and run for 2.5 hours.

16 CLOSE

The meeting concluded at 7:13 pm.

Action Summary over page

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Lake Illawarra
ESTUARY MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE

Item	Action	Officer	Status
	Put mangrove discussion on the agenda for another LIEMC meeting	KB	
	Mike Dowd to follow up again with the relevant manager re the water pollution issue at Lake Heights raised by Annie Marlow to see if the contractor is going to be held as non-compliant against their contract.	MD	
	Put West Dapto update on the agenda for another meeting	KB	
	Keep the LIEMC informed of the status of the White's Seahorse (<i>Hippocampus whitei</i>) determination	CG	
	Kristy to follow up Col Wilton's letters re safety concerns at Reddall Reserve Boat Ramp	KB	Emailed Crown Lands – awaiting response.
11	Find out if community are being consulted in the design of the new ramp at Skiway Park	TH	Done – yes they are.