

**DEPARTMENT OF WATER
SOUTH WEST (WAROONA TO HARVEY) WATER CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROPOSAL
May 2006**

THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

(prepared by the Department of Water from advice provided by 21st Century Dialogue)

Please find below a community engagement process to provide a strategic, whole of government approach to water catchment management in the South West (Waroona to Harvey), with the intent to bring all water catchment planning into a state-wide plan.

Dr Janette Hartz-Karp (Associate of Murdoch University, Institute of Sustainability and Technology Policy (ISTP) and Community Engagement Consultant for '21st Century Dialogue') has been contracted by the Department to facilitate this process.

THE ISSUE

There has been a proposal by Harvey Water to convert the Logue Brook Dam from an irrigation water supply reservoir to use for public drinking water supply. Given current policies regarding drinking water sources, such a conversion would curtail most recreational activities in the catchment area. To date, such issues have been determined site by site. There has been no holistic, whole of government approach to water catchment management in the South West. More broadly, there has been no recent deliberation on the feasibility of joint usages of water.

Hence, questions that may be appropriate to investigated in the community engagement process include:

- To what extent and in what circumstances is the joint use of water supplies feasible?
- What are the water and land recreation opportunities in this region that would foster a sustainable (social, economic and environmental) future?
- What are the community costs and benefits of the proposed conversion of Logue Brook Dam?
- Which offsets might allow Logue Brook to be used as a drinking water source, ie if most recreational activities need to be removed?
- What recreation is acceptable in drinking water catchments, and if acceptable, under what circumstances?

The suggested boundaries of the region under discussion include from Waroona to Harvey. Notably, some decisions, including those for Stirling and Samson, have already been made and it may not be feasible or desirable to revisit them. The suggested boundaries would not preclude examining opportunities in other areas outside the boundaries.

On behalf of Harvey Water, a consultancy called Strategen, carried out the "Harvey Water Pipe Project: Logue Brook Dam Stakeholder Consultation", from November 2005 to February 2006. This consultancy was limited in several ways. Its objective was "the proposed conversion of Logue Brook Dam from an irrigation water supply reservoir to use for public drinking water supply", ie it assumed this conversion without significantly

examining policy options, off-sets or other alternatives. Strategen was only asked to consult with stakeholders, hence the views of the general public were not sought. Nor was there opportunity to seriously deliberate and seek common ground. Finally, the resulting report outlined the stakeholder issues and suggested broad proposals, however it did not resolve the critical issues.

SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY

The following proposal aims to address the key questions listed above and to engage the broader community in understanding the issues and seeking common ground. This differs significantly from traditional community consultation which relies on stakeholder submissions to prepared policies, or workshops and focus groups to educate the interested community on potential options with opportunities to give suggestions. Despite the good intentions of such consultations, evidence has shown that they have often resulted in unintended consequences:

- Increasing the polarisation of views between the stakeholders – sometimes creating an impasse is that continues for years.
- An ever widening gap of trust between the experts/decision makers and the community - with the experts/decision makers becoming cynical about the value of public contributions, and the community expressing either disinterest in the process or outrage at not being heard.

Best practice community engagement, on the other hand, has been shown to be more effective. It seeks to maximise *inclusion* and *representation* to include diverse viewpoints and values, to create opportunities for real *deliberation* based on comprehensive information and a search for common ground, and to provide the opportunity to *influence* policy development, ensuring participants take their responsibilities seriously.

To achieve this will require an engagement ‘process’ rather than an event or series of events, using a quality improvement cycle of ‘plan’, ‘do’, ‘check’ ‘act’.

‘PLAN’

- 1/ Preparatory Meetings with the key government stakeholders – Dept of Water, CALM, Dept of Environment, and Dept of Sport & Recreation.**
(1 meeting with each Dept)
Hold meetings with the government stakeholders to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the history, issues, complexities and opportunities.

Develop clear commitments from each Department to implement the appropriate outcomes of the community engagement process, preferably in a memorandum of understanding.

- 2/ Steering Team**
(approx. 3 meetings of 2 hours each)
Establish a Steering team to oversee the community engagement to ensure it is comprehensive, fair and accountable, and to advise and assist in attracting participants who are broadly representative of the residents and users of the areas under discussion Suggested representatives would be from local and state

government, business, recreational and other interest groups, as well as those who represent specific segments of the population, eg. youth, families, old, indigenous.

3/ 'Expert' Workshop

(1 day)

Hold an 'expert' workshop of government and other experts 'experts' on social, economic and environmental impacts:

- a) review key issues;
- b) identify specific opportunities and designate their constraints

Together with government stakeholders, write up results to be used as follows -

- a) in questions for a community survey and
- b) in short papers and a powerpoint presentation to be presented to the community

'DO'

1/ Community Survey

- a) Develop a survey that includes questions assessing values, possibilities and preferences
- b) Elicit from the WA Electoral Commission a random sample of residents in the relevant South West areas (approx 4,000) and the general metropolitan area to represent users (approx 1,000)
- c) Surveys are distributed by post to the random sample, together with an invitation to the 21st Century Dialogue and return post envelopes
- d) An interim report of survey findings is written promptly, to be used as a basis for designing the Dialogue agenda
- e) A final report of survey findings is written and submitted to the Dept of Water (to be posted on the Dept's web site) together with a synopsis, to be sent to all Dialogue participants.

The advantage of a community survey is that it gives an accurate picture of the community's aspirations and concerns, and counters any bias of local lobby groups.

2/ 21st Century Town Meeting (21st Century Dialogue)

(1 day)

This methodology uses high technology to enable a large scale meeting with small group, face-to-face dialogue. It achieves this by using small table facilitation, networked computers, and a theme team to project instant feedback of themes and priorities to participants. This methodology is considered to be world's best practice. Eg it was used after September 11 to determine how to rebuild ground zero and at the most recent world economic meetings in Davos. It enables maximum inclusiveness, deliberation and influence. Hence, it is by far the best methodology to achieve transparent, 'active' decision making. Participants can see and discuss themes and priorities as they evolve. They leave the Forum with a Report that documents all the outcomes of the day.

As with other Planning initiatives, this Dialogue Forum would also involve participants working with local maps to suggest potential solutions to complex issues.

Dialogue Forum Participation

- a/ Approx 150 participants
 - Approximately 1/3 from the random sample survey respondents
 - Approximately 1/3 from respondents to stakeholder invitations and
 - Approximately 1/3 from respondents to community advertisingParticipants are purposefully seated at tables of 9 (= 17 tables), in a way that maximises diversity.
- b/ Volunteer Support Team of 25:
 - 17 Facilitators (one per table); 1 Area Facilitator and 1 Area Manager
 - 6 Theme Team members
- c/ Employed Support Team of 7
 - 1 Lead Facilitator
 - 1 Theme Team Coordinator
 - 2 IT Support to set up and monitor computer network
 - Event Manager and 2 team members

Note: All members of the Support Team will need to attend the 2 ½ hour training session the afternoon before the Forum.

Purpose of Dialogue Forum

To involve residents and stakeholders in a large scale community engagement that is representative / inclusive, deliberative and influential to progress planning:

- Assessing the feasibility of the joint use of water supplies.
- Examining water and land recreation opportunities in this region that would foster a sustainable (social, economic and environmental) future
- Ascertaining the community costs and benefits of the proposed conversion of Logue Brook
- Determining potential offsets that could allow Logue Brook to be used as a drinking water source
- Assessing what recreation is acceptable in drinking water catchments, and if acceptable, under what circumstances

Aims of the Dialogue Forum

- Broaden understanding of the issues with comprehensive, balanced information
- Provide opportunities to share views, jointly problem solve, learn from one another and from experts.
- Understand the need for ‘trade-offs’ by developing potential plans with actual maps of the area.
- Improve understanding and tolerance between different groups residing, recreating and working in the area.
- Seek common themes and prioritise what is important.

Process of the Dialogue Forum

1. The Steering Team oversees the requests for speakers, panelists and development of information packs that outline the issues from a variety of perspectives.
2. Approximately 200 participants are selected, using an approximate formula of 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 described above
3. Information packs are distributed to all participants, highlighting the importance of participants reading them prior to the Dialogue and preparing questions they want answered.
4. The Dialogue agenda is approved by the Dept of Water and the Steering Team
5. The Dialogue support team of table facilitators and theme team members are elicited
6. Table facilitators and theme team members are trained and given 'how to' notes as preparation
7. The Dialogue is held; feedback is collected from participants and support team
8. A Preliminary Report of the key outcomes is given to each participant before they leave the Dialogue
9. A Final Report of the process, outcomes of the survey and Dialogue is sent to all Dialogue participants and is placed on the Dept web site
10. Policy Teams with Dialogue representatives are formed to further develop the policy using the outcomes of the engagement as guidelines.

3/ Project Teams

(working over a 2 month period)

Role

To work with stakeholders to develop policies and options that are acceptable to stakeholders and the broad community and hence easier to implement.

Membership

Chaired by stakeholder Departments, including key government and community stakeholder representatives and representatives from the Dialogue

Tasks

Using the outcomes of the community engagement process as guidelines, and with expertise and support from the Dept of Water, develop appropriate policies and options. Write a final report to be placed on Web and sent to all Dialogue participants

'CHECK'

1/ Debrief Meeting with Steering Team

Meet with the Steering team to determine if the outcomes of the engagement process have been fairly represented in the policy team reports

2/ Opportunities for Community Feedback on Policies

Take policy team reports back to the other stakeholder groups and broader community to elicit their amendments / suggestions / support.

3/ Evaluation

Carry out an evaluation of the process and write an evaluation report (preferably by an independent group, eg university)

‘ACT’

1/ Final Report

Write a final report, place on web and distribute to *Dialogue* participants.

2/ Progress Report

Write a progress report after 6 months to inform participants and the community of progress on the policy decisions.

PROPOSED TIMELINE (subject to change)

Plan	Action	Comment
1 May	Steering Committee (Oversees community engagement ensuring its comprehensive, fair and accountable)	Send letters inviting members onto the Steering Committee.
4 May	Survey questions meeting (Survey results will provide a picture of community aspirations and concerns)	DoW Offices, 4 th Floor (Room 4.19) from 3 to 4.30pm. Provide consultant with information to help develop a survey with questions assessing values, possibilities and preferences. (Key issues discussed will help Government agency stakeholders identify opportunities and constraints to include in their 'Position Statements').
11 May	1 st Steering Committee meeting	Discuss - process; ways to champion the process and encourage participation; stakeholder groups; information needs, presenters and other issues. Ask for 'draft Position Statements' from Government agency stakeholders.
Mid/late May	Expert Workshop	To review key issues and identify opportunities and constraints. Discuss 'draft Position Statements' from agency stakeholders. Plan to finalise the Statements within 1 week after this workshop.
Late May	2 nd Steering Committee meeting	Amend/Approve the survey questions; consider advertising needs; agree advertisements and fliers; and discuss volunteers/facilitators for Dialogue Day. Consider finalised Position Statements
Late May	Community Survey distributed (allow 2 weeks response time and 2 weeks for data analysis)	Distribute survey questions at least 4 weeks before Community Dialogue Day.
Late June	Community Survey results	Survey findings available for Steering Committee consideration.
Late June	3 rd Steering Committee meeting	Meeting to discuss survey findings and agree agenda and details of the Dialogue Day.
Early/Mid July	Community Dialogue Day	Dialogue Day
Mid/late July	Project Team(s) meeting(s) (Team includes representatives from Community Dialogue Day)	Consider outcome of Dialogue Day and prepare reports for Government to consider in making decisions.
July/Aug	Project Teams report(s)	Final report(s) completed.
Aug/Sept	4 th Steering Committee meeting	To consider and approve Project Team report(s) as a fair representation of the community engagement process. Transmit report(s) to Government

Please contact Stephen Watson for any questions on this matter:

Stephen Watson
Executive Officer

Steering Committee for the South West (Waroona to Harvey) Water Catchment Management proposal
Department of Water

Ph: 6364 6881 Mob: 0428 910 293

stephen.watson@water.wa.gov.au