

Your local voice



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Minutes of the General Meeting Wednesday, 25 February 2009, 7.30pm

1. Opening of meeting

1. Meeting opened 7.45pm.
10 persons present

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Tim Dalton, Susan McMaster, and Tim Walshaw.

3. Minutes

The minutes of public meetings held on 26 November were distributed and approved as presented. (moved: Heather Hughes; Seconded: Sue Liebke)

4. Presentation from ACTEW on Water Security

Presented by Cameron Mackintosh

ACTEW has been planning for ensuring Canberra's water supply since 2001. Changes in water use by Canberra people has meant that 2 years' worth of water has been saved.

In 2004, the water treatment plant at Mt Stromlo was upgraded, so now the Cotter pumping station pumps from the Murrumbidgee River (2007) as well as from the Cotter system dams. Googong Dam has now been taken over from the Commonwealth by the ACT government, which has also signed up to the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement. This agreement restricts the amount of water the ACT can divert from the river systems to 40GL in total per year. The cap allows for population growth (it is set at 20% less than would be proportional to population growth).

In 2005, the Cotter Dam was reinstated (it had been closed after the bushfires of 2003). Also in 2005, the means to do bulk transfers from Cotter to Googong was set up.

The Water Security Program has four parts:

- Major projects
- Saving water
- Drought contingency
- Future planning

Factors that affect water supply:

- Climate change and variability (how much rainfall translates into water that reaches the

dams)

- Population growth
- Reduction targets for water use
- Water restrictions
- Environmental flows
- Bushfires

The long-term average yearly inflows from rainfall over the period 1871-1993 was 200GL. This has diminished by half, and the average yearly inflow over the period 2000-2007 was 100GL. As a result, we need to have permanent conservation measures.

Work has started on enlarging the Cotter Dam and on building capacity to do transfers from the Murrumbidgee River to Googong Dam.

Cotter Dam will be increased from 4GL to 78 GL, and it is expected that the work will be finished by 2011. The construction work is likely to bring a significant increase in traffic on the Cotter Road. ACTEW has set up a Friends of the Cotter group, and WCCC could join it, or just keep in contact to know what is happening.

Murrumbidgee to Googong transfer will be done through a pumping station at Angle Crossing. Water will be pumped through Williamsdale into Burra Creek, probably through underground pipes. A draft Environmental impact Statement is to be prepared within the next few months.

In addition to those two projects, ACTEW is working on two other options:

- Transfers from Tantangara Dam, and
- Design of a demonstration water purification scheme.

Tantangara transfers: At present, water from Tantangara is used for hydro-electricity, then sent to Burrinjuck Dam, then into the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Under ACTEW's plan, water would be sent over to the other side of the mountains, to the Murrumbidgee River, and would then get pumped to Googong from Angle Crossing. This would involve having agreements with the NSW government and with Snowy-Hydro company to compensate them for loss of water, etc, so ACT would need to purchase water rights. Negotiations to do this are under way. The costs would be reflected in water charges for ACT residents.

Water purification plant: The plant would produce 8ML per day of purified water, from water water. At present ACTEW is only doing a design for such a plant, and has to report to the ACT government at the start of 2009, prior to any decision whether to construct the plant or not. The purified water would go into the Cotter Dam. If approval to go ahead were to be given in the first half of 2009, the plant could be finished by 2011. It would be built at the Lower Molonglo Water Treatment Plant.

Mr Mackintosh recommended that WCCC

- Contact the Friends of the Cotter Group
- Keep in touch with developments through the ACTEW website

WCCC members asked about tourist and recreation facilities at the new Cotter Dam, and there was some discussion about what had been there before the January 2003 fires and what would be good for the future.

John Burke thanked Mr Mackintosh for his presentation, which had been most interesting.

5. General Business

Bank accounts

John Burke reported that WCCC has about \$4000 in one bank account and about \$2500 in the other.

Meeting about Streeton Drive-Namatjira Drive intersection

John reported on the meeting with the Chief Minister at the intersection on 19 February. The bike lane was installed in order to reduce Streeton Drive to one lane, as a means of reducing the traffic flow so that cars could more easily exit turning right from Namatjira Drive into Streeton Drive. The bike lane was not installed primarily to improve conditions for cyclists. The intersection is one of the top 20 accident spots in Canberra.

WCCC has suggested that a dedicated slip lane be installed to allow cars travelling south on Streeton Drive (heading towards Rivett and Chapman) to turn left into Namatjira Drive. This would mean that there could still be two lanes for south-bound traffic, but that it would be clearer to drivers wanting to turn right out of Namatjira Drive which cars were turning left into Namatjira, and which were going on towards Hindmarsh Drive. Roads ACT is due to respond to WCCC by 19 March 2009.

The meeting ended at 9.30pm.