

*Your local voice*



[www.wccc.com.au](http://www.wccc.com.au)  
[info@wccc.com.au](mailto:info@wccc.com.au)

PO Box 3701  
Weston Creek ACT 2611

Telephone **(02) 6288 8975**

## **Minutes of the WCCC General Meeting Wednesday, 28 April 2010**

### **Cotter Dam and Water Security**

#### **1. Meeting opened**

Chairman Tom Anderson opened the meeting at 7.40. Sixteen (16) persons were present.

#### **2. Apologies**

Received from Tim Dalton, Rose Jurd, Kirsten Linton, Katy Gallagher, Shane Rattenbury.

#### **3. Presentation**

The Chairman welcomed Ray Hezkial, Project Manager, Cotter Dam Project, and Zarmina Nasir, Community Engagement and Stakeholder Leader for the Cotter Projects.

### **Cotter Dam and Water Security**

The Bulk Water Alliance was formed by ACTEW to carry out the Cotter Dam Project. A new dam wall will be constructed 125 metres downstream from the old dam wall, and will be 50 metres higher than the old dam. When the new dam wall is completed, the valves of the old dam wall will be left open to allow water through; there will be no need for the old dam wall to be breached by explosion.

Projects to mitigate the effects of the closure of Cotter Avenue and picnic area have been carried out, with major works being done at Casuarina Sands. The intention is to leave a positive legacy beyond simply building a new dam wall.

Timeframe: The new dam wall is to be completed by December 2011. For most of 2010, the work will be to strip the foundations down to base rock and build access roads. From the beginning of 2011, the project will move into 24-hour operations to place concrete.

Design work is mostly done, but finalising the details will take a further two months.

To build the dam wall, wet concrete must be placed on wet concrete, and it is expected this work will take 8 months. The dam will be a concrete gravity dam, using a dry type of mix, with road base mixed with cement. More than 1 million tonnes will be needed.

The face of the wall will be injected with grout to fill cracks and gaps; it will not be trowelled like a footpath but will look smooth. The face will be stepped like a pyramid. The steps will be 1.2 metres high and 1 metre deep. There will be two tapered chutes at the sides to allow water to be released quickly when necessary.

There will be seven off-takes at 6-metre spacings. The lowest intake will be almost equal to the

height of the old dam wall, which will act as a sediment trap. Water below the old dam wall will probably become quite stagnant, which could cause water quality problems (as has been seen in Canada). The new intakes will always be higher than the old wall, to ensure water quality is maintained.

Saddle dams: Two saddle dams will be built, one 16 metres high, the other 20 metres high.

Use of Cotter Road: The heaviest use of Cotter Road will occur during the concrete pouring, since that will be a 24-hour operation. An Operations Centre will be set up on Cotter Road to control traffic. Vehicle registration of all staff vehicles will be recorded so all movements can be tracked. Three horse crossings have been put in for equestrians.

Delivery of fly ash will be controlled. Special storage tanks have been constructed with special suction pumps to empty trucks. Trial mixes have been done to ensure the mix is correct for strength and chemical characteristics.

Approvals process: The project is subject to approvals by both Commonwealth and ACT Governments. An Environmental Impact Assessment has been carried out and a Public Environmental Report has been published. Measures to protect Murray Perch are planned. In the ACT there is an independent Dam Technical Regulator, currently Mr Werner Padrin and several other international consultants. The independent regulator is paid by the ACT Government and is completely independent of ACTEW. The approvals process is a staged process, and each package of design documents must be submitted as they are completed. The Australian Committee on Large Dams is also consulted. The approvals process has been completed.

Viewing Platform: The Development Application for a Viewing Platform was approved in February 2009. There will be a walkway and a display about the history of water in the ACT. The platform will be a circular platform directly in front of the valley where construction is happening. It is to be opened in August 2010, and there will be some kind of event to mark the opening.

An education program for all ACT schools is being developed, and will continue after the dam wall has been built.

Construction: First task is to dig out rock from where the new wall will be. The rock will be driven out along the picnic area at Cotter Avenue to the crushing plant that is being commissioned at the moment.

Crushed rock will be stored in piles on the ridge. It will be taken by conveyor to the concrete batch plant, then by another conveyor to the dam wall.

A quarry will be dug out to provide more rock, and when construction of the dam wall is completed, this quarry will be under water and will serve as a habitat for fish, in particular, for the Murray Perch. Excavation of rock from the quarry has already commenced.

The batch plant is to come from the USA. It will be three storeys high.

The rock is porphyritic rhyolite, an igneous rock. The quarry site was chosen because it would supply good rock. The rock needs to be a crystal rock without too much clay content. If there is too much clay the dam wall will swell when wet and contract when dry, which will cause cracking.

Original dam: The original dam was built in 1912, and raised in the 1930s. Additional anchor work was done in the 1990s.

When the project is finished, they will try to return the site to a state that is as natural as possible. They will rip up flat surfaces where the crushing plant and batch plant are located and re-mound them. Landscape work will be done progressively; for example, seeding work is already being carried out.

A new pedestrian bridge will be built to replace the old suspension bridge that was burned out by the 2003 fires.

When will the dam fill? There is no certainty about how long it will take to fill, but possibly between six and nine years after completion.

Environmental flows are managed in several ways. Sometimes water is pumped from the

Murrumbidgee River to below the Cotter Dam wall, to keep the Cotter River flowing.

However, when turbidity levels are too high, or when the Murrumbidgee is too low, no water can be pumped. Sometimes water is pumped from the Cotter Dam into the Cotter River.

Access to the dam wall: After the dam wall is finished, there will be no public access directly to the wall, because it is a restricted catchment area. The public will be able to see the dam only from the Viewing Platform. There will be a walking trail from the picnic area to the top of the ridge and the Platform.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hezkial and Ms Nasir for their presentation, then there was a short break for tea and coffee.

#### **4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes as distributed were approved. (Moved: Mal Ferguson; Seconded: Heather Hughes)

#### **5. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer reported that the current bank balance is \$8299.78.

#### **6. General Business**

##### **1. Working Group for the new Community Park**

The Working Group held its first meeting on Thursday, 22 April.

The Southern Catchment Group said it is willing to support the Working Group and has some expertise that might help.

Some concern has been expressed about how secure the gardens will be in future from development proposals. Tom Anderson, WCCC Deputy Chair said he is confident the gardens are safe from developers, since the Chief Minister's Department has been closely involved in the decision to keep the former CIT arboretum for use as a community park. Those were the concerns of two years ago and should not be an issue now.

Responsibility for the site has not yet been transferred formally from the CIT to TAMS, and it is not completely clear which ACT government agency will have responsibility for the park in future. This creates some short term difficulties for access to the park.

The area of the park site is 3.2 hectares. WCCC's concern is to ensure there is an adequate supply of water, and to get some essential maintenance carried out soon to keep the gardens in good condition.

**Next meeting of the working Group will be Thursday, 20 May, at 7.30 at the Weston Club.**

##### **2. Parking at Cooleman Court**

WCCC plans to have the next public meeting on this topic. A minister from the ACT Government will be invited to this meeting.

Out of area shoppers come to Cooleman Court, adding to the number of local residents who use the shopping precinct.

In September 2009 the WCCC identified some space for extra parking. WCCC has been making representations to Roads ACT since early 2009, but has got very little response.

Traffic arrangements are not well designed, and with lots of pedestrians, many of whom are older residents, safety issues are a priority. There are no designated walkways for shoppers to move from their cars to the shops and back.

Entry to the petrol station has become dangerous, with cars blocking Brierley Street

at peak times.

Shared zones complicate movements in the car parks.

WCCC will ask Communities at Work for some demographic statistics on who uses Cooleman Court. Weston Creek is already heading to be the area with the highest proportion of older people (over 70) in Canberra.

### **3. Flyers for this meeting**

It appears that the flyers that were prepared to advertise this meeting were not delivered by the distributor who had agreed to do the distribution.

### **4. BP offer of petrol vouchers for volunteers**

Barbara Brinton said that BP is offering free petrol vouchers for volunteers, but that people who are interested would need to apply on line by 2 May 2010.

### **5. Construction work in North Weston**

Chair asked if any issues relating to traffic, noise, dust, etc had arisen in connection with the construction work that has commenced near the RSPCA.

TV advertisements for selling land in Wright are already being aired.

ACTPLA has been in touch with WCCC about construction activities in the area of the North Weston pond and the TV advertisements, but the company responsible for the construction of the pond and the John Gorton Drive arterial road have not communicated at all.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

**NEXT MEETING**  
**Wednesday, 26 May 2010, at 7.30pm**