

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change)

REPORT ON CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

12th Annual Conference of Parliamentary Public Works and
Environment Committees
Darwin, 19–21 September 2007

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MEMBERSHIP & STAFF

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Terms of Reference

The Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change) is a current standing committee of the Legislative Assembly, established 8 May 2003, re-established 21 June 2007.

This Committee was first established in 2003 as the Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management to inquire into issues in the sustainable management of natural resources in NSW. The Committee was re-established on 21 June 2007 as the Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change) to inquire into issues of sustainable natural resource management with particular reference to the impact of climate change and, in particular, to report on the following terms of reference:

- a) The likely consequences of human-induced climate change on land (including salinity), water and other natural resources;
- b) Options for ensuring ecologically sustainable natural resource use, taking into particular account the impacts of climate change;
- c) Approaches to land and water use management practices on farms and other natural resource management practices, having regard in particular to the role of such practices in contributing to climate change or as a tool in helping to tackle climate change;
- d) The effectiveness of management systems for ensuring that sustainability measures for the management of natural resources in New South Wales are achieved, having particular regard to climate change; and
- e) The likely consequences of national and international policies on climate change on natural resource management in New South Wales.

Introduction

I am pleased to release this report of attendance at the 12th Annual Conference of Parliamentary Public Works and Environment Committees.

The principle aims of the National Conference of Parliamentary Public Works and Environment Committees are:

- To discuss and be informed on matters related to environmental and resources management and public works, to further the knowledge and understanding of these issues by parliamentary committee members and to thereby enhance their effectiveness as parliamentarians in general and committee members in particular;
- To foster inter-jurisdictional understanding and co-operation; and
- To provide a forum for committee members from different jurisdictions to periodically consider the purpose and role of committees and ways to facilitate and enhance the work that they do.

The 2007 conference of Parliamentary Public Works and Environment Committees was hosted by the Sessional Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. The conference was conducted in Darwin from Wednesday 19 September to Friday 21 September 2007. Mrs Karyn Paluzzano MP, Chair and Mr Michael Daley MP, Deputy Chair, attended the conference representing the committee.

The theme of the conference was “Ancient Knowledge and Science in Contemporary Resource Management”. The conference sought to combine indigenous knowledge and skills with the knowledge of current day science in taking care of the environment. The public works component of the conference centred on the development of the Darwin waterfront.

This report includes a description of the sessions and the jurisdiction report from the New South Wales Standing Committee on Natural Resource Manager (Climate Change) and the Standing Committee on Public Works.



KARYN PALUZZANO, MP

Chair

Day One - Wednesday 19 September 2007

SESSION ONE – HARNESSING AND DEVELOPING CAPACITY

- 1.1 The keynote address was given by Ms Marion Scrymour MLA, Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Child Protection, Minister for Arts and Museums, Minister for Young Territorians, Minister for Women's Policy and Minister for Senior Territorians. She made the point that there was a case for the application of indigenous knowledge to resource management in a sustained manner.
- 1.2 Mr John Childs, Chair of the Daly River Management Advisory Committee, gave a presentation on incorporating different knowledge in an advisory committee to Government. He used the experience of the Daly River Management Advisory Committee. The Committee was established in 2006 to obtain options and advice on how to sustainably manage the Daly River catchment.
- 1.3 Various issues in relation to cross-cultural communications, indigenous traditional information and scientific knowledge were identified. The presentation concluded with a template for collaborative leadership and management and collective decision making.
- 1.4 Ms Hmalan Hunter-Xenie, Indigenous Facilitator and Research Associate, Indigenous Engagement at Charles Darwin University, gave a presentation on meaningful participation by Aboriginal communities as a model for future science and evaluation delivery in the Northern Territory. The presentation focussed on the evaluation of a land and sea management programme by an Aboriginal review group.

SESSION TWO – CONTINUING THE TRADITION OF LOOKING AFTER COUNTRY

- 1.5 Mr Joe Morrison, Executive Officer, North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance [NAILSMA], gave a presentation on the role of NAILSMA in supporting capacity and cultural based economic development opportunities. NAILSMA develops networks and alliances involved in practical Indigenous land and sea management. NAILSMA also supports the inter-generational transfer of customary knowledge and practice.
- 1.6 Mr Paul Purdon, Manager of Environment and Greenhouse Policy, Northern Territory Greenhouse Office, gave a presentation on the Western Arnhem Fire Abatement Program. The program is a part of a project that over the past 10 years has developed an accredited greenhouse emissions inventory methodology. As the indigenous people have shifted off the land, there has been less use of traditional knowledge. Most burning predominantly occurs in the latter half of the dry season, typically as uncontrolled fires. By adopting the traditional practice of strategic burning-off in the early dry season, CO₂ emissions have been halved. This practice has resulted in a greenhouse gas emissions offset agreement between Darwin Liquefied Natural Gas, the Northern Territory Government and Indigenous land owners.

SESSION THREE – PRESENTATION AND MANAGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

- 1.7 Mr Glen Wightman, Ethnobiologist of the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts, gave a presentation on preserving traditional biological knowledge. Mr Wightman's work captures the plant and animal knowledge that is contained in "the heads of elders" and assists in the linking of the traditional wisdom with modern science. The point was made that the research needs to be undertaken in both a culturally sensitive and a scientifically sound manner and is significant as there is a loss of the traditional languages across northern Australia.
- 1.8 Dr Jocelyn Davies, Principal Research Scientist-Geographer, Leader of Livelihoods inLand project, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems and Desert Knowledge Co-operative Research Centre, gave a presentation on applying traditional knowledge for a sustainable livelihoods framework in environmental management. The recognition of the value of traditional knowledge and associated customary law is important to Aboriginal people as a part of sustainable development and for the understanding of biodiversity and ecological relationships. The point was made that the worldwide rate for the extinction of mammals was highest in deserts.
- 1.9 Ms April Campbell, of the Anmatjere Community, and Dr Collins Gipey, Senior Lecturer, School of Science and Primary Industries, Charles Darwin University (Alice Springs campus), gave a presentation outlining the Anmatjere water project. Particular reference was made in providing for Anmatjere law and knowledge in the shaping of a water management plan.
- 1.10 Dr Sue Jackson, Research Scientist, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems Tropical Ecosystems Research Centre, gave a presentation on Indigenous interests in water management. The presentation outlined Indigenous interests in water management, the cultural significance of water, the National Water Initiative [NWI], implementation challenges and identified priority issues. Key points were: the NWI recognises Indigenous interests in water, access and management; policy infrastructure needs to be developed with indigenous input; there are no national standards to determine Indigenous requirements; and economic disadvantage needs consideration.

SESSION FOUR – INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

- 1.11 Mr Graham Phelps, Executive Director-Parks, Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts, was the principal presenter on innovative partnerships for natural resource management in the Northern Territory. The presentation outlined four different partnership arrangements:
 - Nitmiluk National Park – is an example of joint management of a national park since 1989. The Nitmiluk model is regarded as a "benchmark" for joint management in the Northern Territory;
 - New Joint Management Partnerships with traditional owners and Land Councils (Indigenous Land Use Agreements) – provide for an agreed mix of land tenure changes, leases and management based on the strength of the claim;

- Partnerships with Indigenous Ranger Groups – the illustrated example given was the role of Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Organisation in protecting the natural, cultural and heritage values of the Gove Peninsula; and
- Whole of Government Partnership – including the development of the Healthy Country Healthy People agreement to increase Indigenous involvement in sustainable land and sea management to gain other social and economic benefits such as improved physical health.

SESSION FIVE – TOURISM – BRINGING TOGETHER THE OLD AND THE NEW

- 1.12 Mr Tim Hill, Manager- Nature and Culture, Industry Development, Tourism NT, gave a presentation on growing successful Indigenous enterprises within tourism development in the Northern Territory. The presentation covered historic perspectives on Indigenous enterprise, the experience of a variety of businesses used as core studies, and identified important factors for Indigenous enterprise development.
- 1.13 Ms Marcia Kelly, Project Manager, Cultural, Recreation and Tourism Training Advisory Council gave a presentation on two projects inking Indigenous tourism businesses, training providers and other organisations to explore good practice for partnerships and future development. The two projects were:
- “Make it Real” – Training for Enterprise – this project established training partnerships in communities to meet Indigenous enterprise training needs; and
 - Top End Groove – this project utilises e-learning technologies to strengthen and exchange cultural and business knowledge to develop Indigenous enterprises.

SESSION SIX – THE WAY FORWARD

- 1.14 Professor Bruce Campbell, Director of the School of Environmental Research, Charles Darwin University, gave a presentation on payments for environmental services. This presentation gave a definition of payments for environmental services [PES] emphasising voluntary payment by a buyer for the provider of a directly measurable environmental service. Examples given include carbon sequestration and storage, biodiversity, watershed protection and landscape beauty. The point was made that Indigenous groups are directly interested in a number of measures that could tap into the new emerging markets. The presentation also identified possible barriers in suggesting a framework for new opportunities presented by PES and Indigenous people.
- 1.15 Professor Stephen Garnett, Tropical Knowledge, Institute of Advanced Studies, Charles Darwin University, gave a presentation on how looking after country will lead to better health outcomes using the Maningrida community project in western Arnhem Land. The project showed that the engagement of the community in active cultural and land management led to a better diet, more exercise and consequently reduced rates of the precursors to heart disease and diabetes.

Day Two - Thursday 20 September 2007

MORNING – TOUR AND INSPECTION OF DARWIN WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT SITE

- 2.1 Delegates were taken on a tour and inspection of the developments being made on the Darwin waterfront. The development, called The Waterfront, includes:
- A convention centre, featuring a 1,500 auditorium, plenary hall, exhibition space and meeting rooms. Completion is due for mid 2008 and a number of conventions have already been booked;
 - Dining, shopping and entertainment areas;
 - Residential apartments;
 - Hotels and a cruise ship terminal;
 - A wave lagoon;
 - Open space and recreation areas; and
 - Promenades and a covered pedestrian link to the city.

AFTERNOON – VISIT TO WINDOWS ON THE WETLANDS VISITOR CENTRE

- 2.2 Delegates were taken on a visit of the Windows on the Wetlands Visitor Centre on the Arnhem Highway 60 kilometres from Darwin. The centre is located in the Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve. This reserve is under joint management with the Limilngan – Wulna people. They run the Visitor Centre, which is an important location in their culture. Delegates were addressed by Graham Kenyon, Park Ranger and others representing the traditional owners.
- 2.3 The Wetlands Visitor Centre is located on the highest elevation on the Adelaide River floodplain. It provides an introduction to the northern coastal wetlands. There are interactive displays about the cycle of the seasons, the processes of the wetlands, local wildlife as well as local Aboriginal history. The top floor of the Centre opens onto an observation deck with views across the floodplain.

LATE AFTERNOON – TOUR OF CROCODYLUS PARK WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTRE

- 2.4 On the return to Darwin, delegates were taken on a tour of Crocodylus Park. The park has been open for about 30 years. It has roles in tourism, research into crocodiles and public education. Delegates were addressed by Dr Grahame Webb on sustainable uses of wildlife.

Day Three - Friday 21 September 2007

SESSION SEVEN – DEVELOPING DARWIN HARBOUR

- 3.1 The Right Worshipful Garry Lambert, Lord Mayor of Darwin addressed the conference on the future of Darwin and the challenges of development and population growth. Since Cyclone Tracy the population of Darwin has grown from 43,500 to a current 110,000. Other challenges are preserving the heritage stemming from World War II.
- 3.2 Mr John Bailey, Chair of the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee, outlined the role and functions of the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee [DHAC]. DHAC was appointed by statute to advise the Minister on the implementation and review of the Darwin Harbour management plan. The plan of management covers the region of the catchment boundary. It has goals of maintaining a healthy environment, encouraging ecologically and economically sustainable development, protect cultural and heritage values and to foster community ownerships. The committee has 10 members representing a range of relevant interests. This includes local Indigenous participation.
- 3.3 Ms Donna Jackson, Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation and representative on DHAC, gave a presentation advocating Indigenous involvement in natural and cultural resource management and input into DHAC.

JURISDICTION REPORTS

- 3.4 Delegates were then given the opportunity to make brief jurisdiction reports on the work of their respective committees during the previous year.
- 3.5 Mrs Paluzzano, MP gave a report which appears at Appendix One.
- 3.6 The conference was closed by Ted Warren, MLA, Chair of the Northern Territory Sessional Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

CONCLUSION

- 3.7 The delegation wishes to acknowledge Ted Warren, MLA, the Northern Territory Sessional Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, conference presenters and participants, and the staff of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly in hosting and facilitating the conference.

APPENDIX – Report from the New South Wales Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change) and the Standing Committee on Public Works

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CLIMATE CHANGE)

The past year, as with all Parliaments in an election year, has been one of transition. This is particularly so for the NSW Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management which has:

- new terms of reference, with a slight name change;
- almost completely new membership including a new chair; and
- will have a new secretariat.

In general terms, with a fixed election date, in effect committees lose 6 months in every 4-year cycle. Our committees conclude their substantive work in November/December with the end of sittings prior to the Christmas recess. Following the March general election this year the committee were not re-appointed until June.

The reports of the previous Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management include “Better Approaches to Salinity and Drought Management for Sustainable and Profit Farming” and a draft report on disincentives for ecologically sustainable land and water use.

Of interest the committee’s new terms of reference have an emphasis on climate change. The committee’s full name is the Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change). Its terms of reference are:

“A standing committee be appointed to inquire into issues of sustainable natural resource management with particular reference to climate change impacts and, in particular, to report on the following terms of reference:

- (a) The likely consequences of human-induced climate change on land (including salinity), water and other natural resources;
- (b) Options for ensuring ecologically sustainable natural resource use, taking into particular account the impacts of climate change;
- (c) Approaches to land and water use management practices on farms and other natural resource management practices, having regard in particular to the role of such practices in contributing to climate change or as a tool in helping to tackle climate change;
- (d) The effectiveness of management systems for ensuring that sustainability measures for the management of natural resources in New South Wales are achieved, having particular regard to climate change; and

- (e) The likely consequences of national and international policies on climate change on natural resource management in New South Wales.”

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

I am also a member of the Public Works Committee as I was in the previous parliament. I can advise that during 2006 the committee reported on inquiries into:

- Municipal Waste Management; and
- Sportsground Management.

By the way the Public Works Committee also has a new Chair, David Borger MP, who until last week was the Lord Mayor of Parramatta.

Under the committee’s self-referencing powers it has just commenced its first inquiry into Local Government Private Partnerships for Asset Development.

2008 CONFERENCE

Without pre-empting conference proceedings, it is my understanding that it is the turn of the Parliament of New South Wales to host the conference in 2008. Subject to Presiding Officer approval we will do so in collaboration with the Public Works Committee. Accordingly we will write to the respective Chairs, in the New Year, extending invitations for the various committees to attend next year in Sydney.

Karyn Paluzzano, MP
Chair, Standing Committee on NRM (Climate Change)