



Australian Government
Department of Industry
Science, Energy and Resources

National Radioactive Waste Management Program

Barndioota Consultative Committee Wallerberdina Economic Working Group

General Meeting

Tuesday 18 February 2020



General Meeting Details

Date: Tuesday 18 February

Time: 10:00am-11:45am

Venue: Hawker Institute, 58 Elder Terrace, Hawker

Agenda

BCC Independent Convener: Paul Thomas

BCC Deputy Convener: Greg Flint

Time	Item	Lead
9:45am 10 mins	Refreshments available	
10:00am 5 mins	1. Welcome to Country	Uncle Johnny Coulthard
10:05am 15 mins	2. Housekeeping a) Apologies b) Minutes from the previous meeting c) Actions from the previous meeting d) Introduction to the day e) Ministerial arrangements f) Taskforce arrangements Meeting Papers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes from previous meeting • Actions from previous meeting • Proposed future meeting schedule 	Independent Convener & Catherine Russell
10:20am 40 mins	3. Site identification and next steps a) Site identification b) Site-Specific Legislation – what it means c) Timings and next steps d) Committee transition	Catherine Russell
11:15am 30 mins	4. Community Benefit Program – Update Meeting paper: CBP Workshop Report & list of potential projects	Catherine Russell
11:45am	Meeting Close / Refreshments available	

Attendees

Barndioota Consultative Committee

Paul Thomas	Greg Flint	Ashley Moose Haywood
Cecilia Woolford	David Michael	Denise Carpenter
Janice McInnis	John Hennessy	John Rowe
Jon Gill	Julia Henderson	Philip Fels
Ronald Mopsy Daniel	Steven Taylor	Bill McIntosh

Wallerberdina Economic Working Group (as observers)

Malcolm Tiger McKenzie	Ian Carpenter	John Coulthard
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Apologies

Deidre McKenzie	Kevin Wedding	Victor Clark
Sussan Andersson	Aaron Stuart	

Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

Catherine Russell, Manager, Community Engagement, NRWMT Taskforce
 Margaret-Rose McKenzie, Hawker Community Liaison Officer, NRWMT Taskforce
 Tony Hobbs, AusIndustry
 Georgina Neuhaus, Secretariat, NRWMT

Action Items Register

Date	Action Item Number	Detail
18/2/2020	BCC20200218/01	The Department to make enquiries as to whether the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians, could visit the region in conjunction with a visit from the Hon Keith Pitt MP, Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia.
18/2/2020	BCC20200218/02	Members to inform the Secretariat via radioactivewaste@industry.gov.au of any major conflicts with the proposed dates, within 7 days of the distribution of the minutes to members.
18/2/2020	BCC20200218/03	The department to contact members of the committee when the submissions to the department are made available on the website.
18/2/2020	BCC20200218/04	Members of the committee to contact the department at radioactivewaste@industry.gov.au if they would like to give consent for their submissions to be made public.
18/2/2020	BCC20200218/05	The department to make the committees aware when the Community Benefit Program grants applications process opens.
18/2/2020	BCC20200218/06	AusIndustry to provide advice on the timeline for the grant process, and if there was likely to be an extension available to this.

Minutes

Meeting opened at 10:01am

The Independent Convenor (the Convenor) opened the meeting.

1. Welcome to Country

Uncle Johnny Coulthard provided a Welcome to Country.

2. Housekeeping

The Convenor welcomed BCC and BEWG members, and noted that a lot had changed in the time since the last meeting in October 2019. The Convenor reminded members that the last meeting in December 2019 was a workshop to discuss the Community Benefits Program, and that we would discuss this later in the agenda, but that this was the first formal meeting since October 2019.

The Convenor explained to the committee that he had spoken to former Minister Canavan on the eve of the site identification decision. In this call, they discussed the site identification, and how the process would unfold from this point, which will be further discussed with the committee in this meeting.

Members agreed that the BCC and the BEWG should combine, with equal rights of interaction and engagement, for the remainder of these meetings until the BCC and WEWG are disbanded. Members also considered the potential for the Committees to continuing to work together for the future economic viability of the community beyond the department's involvement.

The Convenor noted there had been a change of Minister, and he had not yet had the chance to speak with him, but looked forward to engaging with him.

Following a question from a member, the Convenor noted that the Department was taking photographs of the meeting for their records; objections to use of photographs being taken of specific members were noted.

a) Apologies

Apologies were received from Sussan Anderson, Victor Clark, Deidre McKenzie, and Kevin Wedding, and were noted by members.

The Convenor noted that Ms Chard was unable to attend, and that Ms Russell would be representing the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources for the duration of the meeting.

b) Minutes from the previous meeting

The Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted, following distribution out of session.

c) Actions from the previous meeting

Ms Russell talked members through the outstanding action items, noting these would either be dealt with during this meeting, or were closed, following the site identification announcement.

d) Introduction to the day

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The Convenor invited Ms Russell to talk members through the order of the day. Ms Russell explained that the format would be shorter than a usual meeting, and would consist of: discussion around the site identification decision, and the factors and items that led to that decision; discussion about the Site Specific Legislation that had been introduced to the House of Representatives; a discussion about the Community Benefits Program, following the workshop in December 2019, and next steps.

Members asked if it was necessary to discuss the selection, given it had happened and was now in the past. The Convenor and others agreed that it would still be useful for them to understand this process, so they could discuss it in the community if questioned.

e) Ministerial arrangements

Ms Russell explained to members that, following the resignation of former Minister Canavan, and a brief period of Minister Littleproud taking charge of the portfolio, the Hon Keith Pitt MP was now the Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia. Ms Russell gave a brief background on Minister Pitt, including his previous engagement on radioactive waste issues. Ms Russell explained the Minister had made an undertaking to visit both communities in the near future.

Members discussed whether the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians, could also visit the community. Ms Russell undertook to make enquiries.

BCC20200218/A01 The Department to make enquiries as to whether the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians, could visit the region in conjunction with a visit from the Hon Keith Pitt MP, Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia.

The Convenor noted the importance of taking up the opportunity to meet with Minister Pitt, to raise ongoing concerns of the group, as a united front.

f) Taskforce arrangements

Ms Russell provided an update on arrangements in the taskforce, notably that Jenni Philippa, former Manager, Community Engagement, had moved on to a new role in the department. Ms Russell noted that she would be fulfilling the role of Manager, Community Engagement, in an acting capacity until a permanent replacement for the role would be found. Ms Russell also distributed her contact details to members.

g) Future meeting dates

Members had distributed to them a forward meeting schedule, with proposed future meeting dates of Wednesday 1 April and Monday 18 May. Ms Russell asked for feedback on these dates to be provided to the Secretariat.

BCC20200218/A02 Members to inform the Secretariat via radioactivewaste@industry.gov.au of any major conflicts with the proposed dates, within 7 days of the distribution of the minutes to members.

3. Site identification and next steps

a) Site identification

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Ms Russell talked the committee through the site identification process, and the kind of evidence that was provided to the former Minister to support his deliberations.

It was found that all sites were suitable to host the facility, however, some sites were more complex than others and required greater amounts of mitigation. The reports and studies were comprehensive, taking 2.5 years to complete, with a range of expertise, including heritage and cultural assessments.

Ms Russell discussed the various indicators of community sentiment and the participation rates. Ms Russell confirmed that a report would be published at a later date, as part of the department's submission to the expected parliamentary inquiry into the proposed legislation.

Question: There was a majority vote for the process to continue in the past, but now one large group has said no, whilst many in the community are very supportive. Have these results been manipulated?

Ms Russell explained that, in the ballot and public submissions process, the department did a lot of work to gather as much evidence of sentiment as possible, across many groups, and put all the information in to the report to the Minister. The department regarded all sentiment as important and valuable.

The Convenor noted the frustrations within particular community groups, and that there needed to be an ongoing discussion. Minister Canavan had noted to the Convenor that there was a very clear lack of support for Wallerberdina, and he had committed not to impose the facility on an unwilling community. However, the manner in which the community worked together through this issue gives the community confidence and the strength to work together on other projects.

Ms Russell noted that despite the ballot demonstrating there was not enough broad community support for the proposal, there was still some support in the area.

Question: Where did the Barngala Determination Aboriginal Corporation 100% opposition vote fit in to the statistics in Kimba?

Ms Russell noted that the following was on the public record and was provided to the Minister: there were 209 eligible voters, of which 87 ballots were cast; four were found to be informal. Therefore, 39% of eligible voters participated.

Members noted it was helpful to understand how the statistics had been broken down.

Question: The business survey was conducted for the Flinders but is not included. Could you please explain why this wasn't included?

Ms Russell explained that when the Minister made his decision not to continue the process at Wallerberdina, the department suspended the business and neighbour surveys. Whilst some data had been collected, the survey was not completed and therefore the data was not analysed.

Question: When will the submissions be available on the website?

Ms Russell noted only a small portion of the public submissions had given permission to be made public, however, those who had not given permission were welcome to contact the department to give their permission for their submissions to be published. Ms Russell explained that in a public submission process, consent had to be given for submissions to be made public, and that the department was doing a lot of work to ensure no confidential

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information, either commercial, legal, or personal, was included in submissions that were published. As such, some documents published may have some redactions, and publication was expected in the next couple of weeks.

BCC20200218/A03 The department to contact members of the committee when the submissions to the department are made available on the website.

BCC20200218/A04 Members of the committee to contact the department at radioactivewaste@industry.gov.au if they would like to give consent for their submissions to be made public.

Question: Whilst acknowledging that the business survey was suspended, will any of that data be made available through this process?

Ms Russell advised that there was no analysis of the data collected. If members wanted access to it, they could write to the department to request this, and the department could examine what might be possible but the data is raw and has not been analysed for its intended purpose as it was no longer deemed necessary.

The Convenor concluded this item by once again reiterating that the minority support for the Wallerberdina site was clear and in contrast to the equally clear majority support at Kimba.

b) Legislation Amendments

Ms Russell updated the committee, explaining that the new Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia had last week introduced legislation to the Parliament (*The National Radioactive Waste Management Amendment (Site Specification, Community Fund, and Other Measures) Bill 2020*), which specifies the Napandee site, and updates the current Act, particularly in relation to the community fund. This was necessary because, when the legislation was first drafted, it was in the context of a nomination period in which sites in the Northern Territory were nominated (these were subsequently withdrawn). This legislation also provides the Parliament, on behalf of the Australian public, a say in the site selection and process. Ms Russell also noted the legislation contains provisions to allow the government to acquire a small amount of additional land, if required, to provide emergency access routes or other works to mitigate any technical issues, if necessary.

Question: Why can't there be an additional item in the legislation to enshrine support to this (Hawker) community going forward, noting the impact on the community?

Ms Russell advised that individuals were welcome to make submissions to the Senate Inquiry when it opened.

Members discussed the potential for the BCC and/or WEWG to make a submission, as they negotiated and engaged in the process in good faith, and there was still a lot of impact on the community, despite not being nominated as the host community. The Convenor undertook to discuss this with members.

c) Timings and next steps

d) Committee transition

Ms Russell explained that the nature of the committees was now changing. The focus would be very different, mostly focussing on the Community Benefit Program. If members wanted to

reconsider their ongoing involvement, they were welcome to do so, and could email a simple resignation to the department, if that was their preferred course of action. There are also provisions for the committees to dissolve at the conclusion of that process.

Question: What is the department or the Minister's commitment to the community in the next few years?

The Convenor advised that he was yet to speak to the new Minister to discuss these sorts of issues. Members reiterated their view that there should be an ongoing commitment to the community. Ms Russell once again advised that if the community wanted to make submissions to the Senate Inquiry process, they were welcome to do so.

The Convenor emphasised to members that the focus should be given to the appropriate distribution of the Community Benefit Program funding, and the committee could think about its future role following this. The Convenor acknowledged that this conversation needed to take place, separately from today's meeting. The Convenor also noted that the Minister needed to come to the community to meet and talk with the community, to develop his own empathy and understanding of the process. The committee and community needed to develop and maximise this personal relationship during the Minister's visit (TBC March).

4. Community Benefit Program – Update

Ms Russell provided an update on the Community Benefit Program. She thanked those who participated in the workshop in December 2019, and a copy of the workshop report and the proposed projects discussed was distributed to attendees. Ms Russell provided a short summary, explaining that the CBP Workshop had been a great starting point for discussion of ideas, grant amounts, and other available grants. Members discussed the boundaries, and generally the process of administering the grants was agreed to continue, though members had expressed a desire to be more involved in the assessment process.

Ms Russell explained that, with a change in Minister, the expected timeline for the grants process had been pushed back somewhat, as they require Ministerial approval.

As soon as the applications open, the department will notify the committee. We anticipate there will be about 6-8 weeks for applications to be received, which will then be developed into a shortlist by AusIndustry. Once shortlisted, this committee could provide a check/balance to applications. Ms Russell emphasised that there was nothing preventing community members drafting their applications now, rather than waiting for the process to open as guidelines will broadly be consistent with previous rounds. Ms Russell noted that Tony Hobbs from AusIndustry was well-placed to help with this; Mr Hobbs distributed his business card to members.

BCC20200218/A05 The department to make the committees aware when the Community Benefit Program grants applications process opens.

Question: When will the notes from the CBP Workshop be distributed to the committee?

Ms Russell confirmed that the document distributed to the members in the room was the report from the CBP Workshop. Ms Russell noted that because the structure and purpose of the workshops was very different to an ordinary meeting of the committees, this report looked different to usual minutes.

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Question: Are those projects discussed at the CBP Workshop, and listed in this report, the only ones eligible for the CBP funding?

Ms Russell said this was not the case. This list of projects were those suggested by participants in the CBP Workshop, which were then tested against the current guidelines, and members had asked for this record of projects. It is by no means an exhaustive or definitive list of the projects the community might want to put forward.

Members noted with thanks the productive nature of the CBP Workshop in December 2019, with all participants strategically and actively engaged, to try and leverage the maximum benefits possible for the whole community.

Ms Russell provided a more detailed recap of the CBP Workshop. Ms Russell explained that the participants looked at what the community had said they needed, and then compared previous CBP projects against these themes. The feedback that projects should try and cover off on some of these “theme needs” was brought to the forefront of the guidelines, so that projects were designed around those. Participants then looked at how complex projects were, and also how the funding was managed, e.g. over time, and whether this suited the projects. AusIndustry talked participants through other potential sources of funding available for community projects, to encourage members to understand that there was opportunity out there for projects that might be beyond the funding for CBP, or that might be better suited to other programs. Participants also discussed the assessment process, looking at the merits of the project against the guidelines, and the notion of needing to be sure the community really wants the project.

Question: Can people say no to projects?

Ms Russell explained that the ideal position would be to gain community support for proposed projects. Members further discussed that the need to quantify or demonstrate community support was seen as particularly important for grants over \$250,000. Some members expressed support for all projects to demonstrate community support. Ms Russell noted that every application had to make the case for how it would be of benefit to the community.

Question: Council sent out a letter asking for suggested projects. Does this mean that they are funnelling/filtering projects, and controlling the process, especially if the formal process has not actually opened yet?

The Deputy Convenor explained that the Council correspondence related mostly to the Drought Assistance Funding they had received, however, those submissions were also being used to draw up the Council’s ‘wish list’ for the year. The Deputy Convenor noted that the CBP Process was separate to this, however, there may be projects that were submitted to Council that community groups might prefer to submit for CBP funding. Ms Russell reminded members that projects could not receive two Commonwealth grants.

In concluding Item 4, members discussed the need to be organised and ready for when the process did open. Ms Russell again emphasised that, though the Program will again be extensively advertised when the process opened, that members should be speaking to the community and preparing their submissions.

Question: Can the funds be used for feasibility studies or business plans?

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Ms Russell advised that large and expensive projects could be broken down into sections, and feasibility studies or business plans might be one of those sections. Applications could be made for CBP funding for these studies or plans.

Question: Was it likely there could be an extension to the process?

Ms Russell undertook to ask AusIndustry for advice on that, but again emphasised that there should be no timing issue, as applications can be drafted now, and tweaked based on changes to the guidelines, as requested by the group.

BCC20200218/A06 AusIndustry to provide advice on the timeline for the grant process, and if there was likely to be an extension available to this.

Question: In the CBP Workshop, we discussed the boundaries for where eligible projects could come from. Has this been resolved?

Ms Russell advised that in the CBP Workshop, there was clear resistance from participants to change the current geographic boundaries from within which projects could come. This sentiment, and other pieces of evidence, have been submitted to the Minister for his decision on whether to change the boundaries, and we await that decision.

The Convenor brought the meeting to a close.

Meeting closed: 11:43am