Kimberley Water Activities
E-bulletin May 2009

The Department of Water does a range of work in the Kimberley, including:

- Licensing
- Water Information (quality and quantity)
- Planning
- Waterways Management

Planning progress
The Department of Water is currently working towards the development of a Kimberley regional water strategy and has made significant progress towards the plan.

Discussion papers
The planning team has been developing discussion papers for the six Kimberley sub-regions - outlining their key water issues and suggesting actions for dealing with them.

We have developed the discussion papers by reviewing many previous planning and Natural Resource Management documents, listening to people through our partnerships with waterways education, research licensing, and interaction with catchment groups.
Presenting the papers to stakeholders

The team has taken the discussion papers to various groups (eg: Fitzcam pictured right) to check that we have the issues and actions right and to seek feedback about any issues they may have missed. The team will be carrying out further consultation over the coming months for each of the sub-regions.

Next steps

We hope to present the discussion papers to key stakeholders and receive feedback over the next couple of months. We will then aggregate the sub-regional issues into a *draft Kimberley regional water strategy*, and hope to present this to stakeholders again before we release the draft plan for formal public comment. We aim to have a draft plan written by the end of 2009.

Other water work

**Joint management of Reserve 31165**

The Department of Water and the Miriuwung Gajerrong people jointly manage a water reserve that borders the eastern and southern shores of Lake Argyle. A management plan for the reserve has been developed and progress is now being made to implement it. A project officer has been employed to assist with the implementation and initial training of Dawang members from Bilbidjing, No Name, Yunurr and Mandangala to prepare them to become Rangers for the reserve.

**La Grange Allocation Plan**

We have talked to most stakeholders about the La Grange water plan and people have prepared submissions.

The department is preparing a statement of response to those submissions and is amending the draft plan from comments received.
Waterways education
A community education program partnering with the University of Western Australia is helping to train rangers and school children in waterway health and ecology.

The team has been out with people in the Fitzroy Mt Barnett, and Paraku to deliver the program, and there has been a very enthusiastic response.

We are now seeking further funding to expand and continue the program due to the exciting response.

Fish Parasite project at Paraku
During initial discussions with people about water, the presence of fish parasites in Lake Gregory was raised by traditional owners at Paruku as a critical waterway health issue. A two week field trip was organised and the waterways program was able to initiate, and support, a research project on the fish parasite through University of Canberra. This project allowed us to work closely with the community to address their waterways concerns and couple this with the waterways education program whilst maintaining and developing a strong sense of community ownership over the research.

Measuring Fitzroy flows in the wet season
The water information team focused on using new technologies to measure surface water flows in the Fitzroy river this wet season. It is difficult to monitor flow regimes due to very large peak water volumes and the dispersal of flow across braided channels and floodplain.
Fitzroy surface water - groundwater interaction project

This project will improve the groundwater and surface water information on the Fitzroy River to support knowledge required for water planning and management for this major northern Australian river. The study area is the lower Fitzroy floodplain, from upstream of Fitzroy Crossing to the estuary at Willare. Louise Stelfox, senior hydrogeologist, has given presentations to FitzCAM, the Pastoral Graziers Association in Derby and the Kimberley Land Council in Broome as well as community. The accuracy of surface water flows has been improved and a bore database is nearing completion. The next stage is to gain clearance from the KLC and owner/occupiers to drill bores at key locations on the floodplain.

Indigenous Water Policy Group

The Department of Water would like to acknowledge an error in the previous e-bulletin where we stated that the Department of Water was a member of the Indigenous Water Policy Group (IWPG) when in fact they are a member of the Policy Engagement Group to the IWPG. We would like to acknowledge the error and issue an apology for any misrepresentation.

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