

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ARTESIAN BORE WATER USERS
ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

HELD AT THE CROSSING THEATRE, NARRABRI ON 30TH MAY 2012

PRESENT: Kevin Duncan, Geoff Nicholson, Karen Nicholson, Robert Harris, Bill Lambert, Anne Kennedy, Neil Kennedy, James Matchett, Ross Beasley, Bart Officer, Tony Pickard, Brian McMullin, Joan McNaughton, Karen Thurston, Randal Warby, Robert Harris, Steve Cheal, Mick Marshall and Sonya Marshall.

VISITORS: Bevan O'Regan and John Polglase

APOLOGIES: Michael Mailer, Wal Carrigan, Rory Treweeke, Jan Currey, Bill McCumstie, Brian Lees, Mick O'Connor, Tony Hall, Janet Bayliss, Ros Roland, Rick Marshall and Bill Moore.

PREVIOUS MINUTES: Secretary Joan McNaughton read the Minutes of the previous meeting.

MOTION: Moved Geoff Nicholson, seconded by Anne Kennedy that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted. **CARRIED**

PRESIDENT: Geoff Nicholson welcomed all present and thanked them all for attending the meeting and welcomed our guest speakers. Geoff also asked those present if they would accept Kevin Duncan to chair the meeting and this was accepted.

CHAIRMAN: At the request of the President, Kevin Duncan chaired the meeting and welcomed those present and especially thanked our visitors, Cl. Bevan O'Regan, who will talk about Coal Seam Gas and the local council's views on coal seam gas within the shire. Ross Beasley to present an update on the GAB monitoring network and Steve Cheal who will advise on the Cap & Pipe program. Also John Polglase who will advise of the effects of coal seam gas drilling and its effects on close bores.

PRESIDENTS REPORT: Geoff Nicholson addressed the meeting recalling many items that had occurred during the year and how he had been approached by several members to look into water usage by Coal mines and the problems that could affect the GAB because of coal seam gas drilling.

Geoff outlined his work over the previous year, and informed the meeting that he had sent a letter to the Minister of water but had no reply to date. Geoff also approached Robyn Faber local member of government for some answers to issues that have arisen with Coal Seam Gas and its effects but has had no response. He also had a lot of calls from concerned members chasing funding for Cap and Piping.

MOTION: Moved by Geoff Nicholson, seconded by Anne Kennedy that the President's Report be accepted. **CARRIED**

FINANCIAL REPORT: The Secretary presented the financial report for the year ended 31st December 2011.

MOTION: Moved by Joan McNaughton, seconded by Rob Harris, that the finance report for the year ending 31st December 2011 be accepted. **CARRIED**

MOTION: Moved by Rob Harris, seconded by Ranauld Warby that the Committee of N,S,E,&W may not be needed but the Committees remain and continue with two representatives from each. **CARRIED**

Robert Harris stated that the Government Ministers do not listen nor do they reply to any of the correspondence. Ranauld Warby would like the ABWUA to continue for the Trusts problems and concerns, with the Cap and Piping, Coal Seam Gas and the management of the Artesian Basin, and that the committee's of N,S, E & W are to form small groups to bring from their area's items of concerns, and problems to the ABWUA.

AUDITOR REPORT: The Auditor's report was read by the Secretary.

MOTION: Moved by Joan McNaughton and seconded by Anne Kennedy, that the Auditor be retained for the next financial year. **CARRIED**

CORRESPONDENCE: A brief outline of the correspondence was provided by the Secretary and the Chairman invited the members to read the correspondence should they desire to do so.

CHAIRMAN: It was declared by the Chairman, Kevin Duncan, that all positions were now vacant and called for the election of a President and executive Committee.

PRESIDENT/CHAIRMAN

MOTION: It was moved by Geoff Nicolson and seconded by Robert Harris that Anne Kennedy, take the role as President/Chairman.

Anne Kennedy accepted the position. **CARRIED**

VICE PRESIDENT:

MOTION: Moved by Anne Kennedy, seconded by Bart Officer that Geoff Nicholson be Vice President.

Geoff Nicolson accepted the position. **CARRIED**

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & REPRESENTATIVES:

MOTION: It was moved by Bart Officer and second by James Matchett that the executive committee and representatives remain the same as last year with the exception of John Oats from Boomi East to act as the Northern representative, and that Sonya Marshall replace Mick Marshall. **CARRIED**

PRIVATE BORES – REPRESENTATIVES:

Anne Kennedy and Tony Pickard to represent owners of private bores.

CARRIED

SECRETARY/TREASURER/PUBLIC OFFICER:

It was moved by Robert Harris and seconded by Anne Kennedy that J & K McNaughton continue to act in these positions and a fee of \$25.00 per hour is to remain. **CARRIED**

MEMBERSHIP FEES:

MOTION: It was moved by Bart Officer and second by Sonya Marshall that the membership fees for each Trust remain at \$100.00 and the fees for Private Bores are to be \$50.00. GST to be added to both. **UNANIMOUS**

TRUST CHAIRMAN FEES:

MOTION: Moved by Bart Officer and seconded by Sonya Marshall that the Chairman's Fees to be \$500.00 per annum. **CARRIED**

ADVISERS:

MOTION: Moved by Anne Kennedy and seconded by Geoff Nicolson that Kevin Duncan and Tony hall remain appointed as advisers for the ABWUA. **CARRIED**

NSW GOV.GABAG: The ABWUA four representatives on the GABAG are to remain the same as last year, Geoff Nicolson, Anne Kennedy, David Officer and Sonya Marshall.

CARRIED

PRIVATE BORES – REPRESENTATIVES:

Anne Kennedy and Tony Pickard to represent owners of private bores.

CARRIED

GENERAL BUSINESS:

RANALD WARBY: Stated that the meeting with the Minister went well, but no further correspondence at this stage. Ranald said that he attended a meeting in Moree but had nothing further to add at this stage. He is to have a meeting with George Gates in Moree on the 18th June 2012 at the RSL at 10.00 am to talk on CSG plans. Ranald will send reports to the ABWUA.

STEVE CHEAL: Steve addressed the meeting with an update of Cap & Piping showing figures since 1999 for the total schemes and their costs provided by the State and Federal Government. The next Grants at this point of time are unknown until the budget is published.

ROSS BEASLEY: Almost the entire ABWUA meeting was focussed on the issue of Coal Seam Gas mining, with the ABWUA members expressing unanimous concern about the disastrous impact that CSG mining would have on the Great Artesian Basin. All agreed that the threat to our aquifers from CSG mining must be addressed, as a priority. There was much discussion on how this could best be achieved. A sub-group to focus on CSG mining was formed.

Ross gave a graphic display of Bore monitoring which provided long term data and he expressed his desire to obtain more funding so that a greater area over the artesian basin could prove that Cap & Piping is increasing pressure.

JOHN POLGLASE:

A leading hydro geologist and geochemist, John gave a most interesting presentation to the meeting, on the history of the GAB. He explained how Australia (and the GAB) had formed over the many millennia of the various geological periods. With clear diagrams, John showed how the fluvial sedimentation – from the Cretaceous period to the present time - had formed our Basin.

Some GAB facts he explained to us, were that the GAB had formed and filled over 100 million years, during Jurassic to early Cretaceous periods, and that the GAB extends over 1.7 million square km in area. And that our groundwater ages from 1,000 to 2,000,000 years – in other words, it is fossil water. As we are constantly being told, all over the world, the fossil waters are running out - they now say that water will run out, before oil. So John clarified that this is precious, irreplaceable, finite ancient water, which we are wasting.

John also explained how the Geological basins are filled with sedimentary detritus. And then the grain size and grain aggregation of this detritus is 'sorted' or 'graded' by physical weathering, chemical weathering, gravity, water and wind. The grain sizes are what decide on the density or porosity of the stone. John also posed some very important questions for the government that should be answered before this industry proceeds. Just a very few of them are:

- From what groundwater horizons are 'production water' to be extracted?
- What is the volume and quality of the 'production water' to be extracted?
- What void volumes will be created by this extraction?
- What 'non-production' groundwater will be used in CSG processing operations?
- What pollutants and wastes will be introduced and produced during CSG exploration and extraction?
- How and where and by whom will these pollutants and wastes be managed throughout the life-cycle of the planned gas field(s) - and beyond?
- Will fluid re-injection be employed? (John has explained that re-injection is as bad as hydraulic fracturing, in the damage it does).

It was extremely good of John to come and give us this interesting insight into our precious GAB.

TONY PICKARD:

Addressed the meeting and told us of the issues that he has encountered with the Coal Seam Gas mining, he has had exhaustive, independent testing done on his water – ongoing over a couple of months as it needs to be apparently – to prove the bacteria is growing. He had to have a bacteriologist (or microbiologist) do the testing, as there were bacteria present, in the report was the presence of Stygofauna, and Peter Servo (who carried out the testing) said the very presence of Stygofauna at all was remarkable, as they were the first ever found in the Pilliga. They were also the first ever found at that depth. The report said that the testing proved that the direct connectivity (or conductivity) between the overly shallow aquifer and the unconsolidated aquifers. The second report done in June just reinforced the first report done in May had found - That there has been a massive increase in the sulphate reducing bacteria (SRB).

ROBERT HARRIS: Spoke of Coal Seam Gas and talk of a visit to Santos in QLD, Santos at the moment are dismantling Bibblewindi treatment works, and Dewhurst 8 will be their major works, it will be a full scale pilot production. Bacteria (SRB) are present in the bore in small and controlled numbers; they are controlled by the amount of food source available. When you introduce other bacteria (naphthalemic, hydrocarbon utilising and methogens) the SRB feed on the by-products and the dead bacteria when they are killed off. That's why they have grown to tens of thousands, when they should be only in the hundreds.

BEVAN O'REAGAN: Bevan was invited to our meeting to give us updates on the Council's Views on Coal Seam Gas Mining. Bevan feels that Coal Seam Gas Mining is damaging one of the icons of Australia, "The Great Artesian Basin". He has spoken to Council and local Government on numerous times and has had no response or action.

Bevan explained to the meeting that Council have the last say even if the mining companies have permission from the land owners to carry out any mining, they still need to have permits for the different use of the land, eg: If they wanted a feedlot, or if they want to mine, they are changing what they are using the land for, and for this change they must get permits and permission from the Council, so any mining can continue while ever they have the Council's permission.

Bevan feels that the Local Government are just dragging their feet with any issues that are put forward to them regarding the damage caused by the Coal Seam Gas Mining.

ACTION PLAN:-

BEVAN O'REAGAN: Bevan is going to try and get the Narrabri council to have a public meeting.

ABWUA: to request monitoring and analysis of water around Coal Seam Gas areas.

MOTION: It was moved by Kevin Duncan that a Coal Seam Gas committee be formed to obtain information for the ABWUA. Seconded by Ranald Warby. **CARRIED**

MOTION: Moved Bart Officer seconded Ranald Walsby that the President calls upon her choice of members to assist her with CSG. **CARRIED**
President Anne Kennedy's group to be Bevan O'Regan, Bart Officer and Tony Pickard to report to Ranald's group so that information can be shared and make more effective representation to authorities.

CSG: It was asked if the ABWUA could contact Alan Jones and that we need to communicate with the local Government who are the only one's able to help us fight CSG.

DAVID OFFICER: for the ABWUA is to contact Alan Jones and request he talks to Anne Kennedy regarding our concerns with the contamination of the Artesian Basin.

REQUEST FOR FUNDING:

MOTION: It was moved by Geoff Nicholson, seconded by Bart Officer, that a funding request for water analysis on a contaminated bore be granted. ABWUA to provide \$5000.00. **CARRIED**

VENUE FOR NEXT YEARS AGM: Secretary asked those present for suggestions on a venue for next year's AGM and spoke about two other venues. It was agreed by all those present that the Crossing Theatre was a great place to hold meetings and wished it to be there again next year.

CARRIED

Meeting closed at 3.30pm

President/Chairman..... Secretary.....