

## **Gingin Water Group Inc AGM October 20<sup>th</sup> 2014**

### **Chairmans Reports**

It gives me great pleasure to deliver my third annual report as chairman of GWG Inc.

Firstly may I welcome you all here with special mention to some special attendees.

Our State MP Shane Love.

Our DOW regional manager Don Cummins and he has brought 3 important departmental officers with him well known to us:

- Susan Worley
- Moe Tiong
- Lidia Boniecka..surface water assessment engineer

NACC has sent from Geraldton one of their biodiversity and climate change specialists Violetta Pristel , and from Jurien Bay their Landcare field officer specialising in coastal and wetland ecologies , Rodger Walker.

Welcome to you all , the community has come to hear your wisdom , not mine.

Your GWG has been silently busy all year forming relationships across the full spectrum of stakeholders who participate in the water cycle as it relates to the greater Gingin region.

Some of these interactions required input and responses to reports , evaluations and policy statements as they were prepared and issued by various bodies.

GWG did this on behalf of the Gingin community.

Without the GWG the community would not have made a submission to the Gingin Groundwater Allocation Plan. I am sure our inputs made a real difference to this plan.

Without GWG Image Resources would not have been able to connect with the community as well as it did in the preparation the Public Environmental Review

documents of its intended Boonoonarring Sand mining venture. GWG won important considerations of neighbouring wetlands and woodland ecologies.

Without GWG the community would not have submitted a response to this PER to the EPA.

The State Governments intended Water Law Reform agenda was released to the community as a discussion paper for comment.

GWG made a comprehensive submission reflecting the likely local impacts of the law changes to our local landholders and water users.

GWG has participated in several forums to keep abreast of the gas and oil industry activity at Red Gully.

GWG hosted a successful forum allowing NACC to gain local input into their attempt to address the effects of climate change and develop strategies to help their constituents deal with the effects into the future.

GWG has consulted closely with the DOW in an attempt to understand the reduced surface water flows across our region. Our persistence in pointing out the local concerns and observations has led to Lidia's research across the entire Brook system, and her ultimate presence here tonight. GWG thanks the DOW for this particular effort.

The full committee attended the August meeting to discuss with our special guest John Shannon CEO of Vegies WA, the roles of GWG and develop trust and a positive relationship with the horticultural industry, the main water user in our region. The meeting was productive and successful.

I would like to thank Jacki Shervington and Northern Valley News for printing our articles whenever received. These are being used instead of newsletters as they reach a much wider audience than our current data base.

Over the last year we have written 6 articles, all between 600-900 words, some with a picture.

September, October and November of 2013 carried a comprehensive 3 part series to explain the recently released Gingin Groundwater Allocation Plan (for Public comment)

In April 2014 “Gingin Brook a system under threat” discussed the Evaluation statement of the Gingin surface water allocation plan released by the DOW.

Uniquely the Gingin region is covered by 3 different water allocation plans . Each contains a mandatory requirement for regular evaluation and release of such statements. The local community will achieve the most benefit from this evaluation process if it has an active ongoing representation in this process. GWG is in a position to do this.

The August 2014 article introduced the concept of the greater Brook system being part of an important regional biodiversity feature and the October article advertised this forum and discussed the need for a Community Waterway Monitoring project.

I hope that this year of activity has not gone unnoticed in the local community and will be reflected in a larger and more active membership.

NACC has certainly noticed the growth of GWG over the last three years and as such offered to send me to Melbourne last month to attend the National Landcare conference which celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

I thank NACC for that commitment. It was a \$2000 subsidy which I accepted on behalf of the Gingin community. I intend to repay in kind.

The conference was most impressive and my eyes were really opened to the extent and importance of Landcare activity throughout Australia.

Gingin LCDC and Gingin Brook Preservation Group , both now long dismantled, were once very active and carried out excellent work. A major report on the health of the Gingin Brook system was completed locally in 2002 . It made many recommendations most of which need re-evaluation and action.

The conference made it obvious to me that Landcare had come a long way past being just a green movement.

It now engages the fullest possible spectrum from producers to consumers.

I observed very large projects to micro ones. In many cases the most successful farmers in a region were the drivers. They realised that to increase the quality

of the natural environment around them was to increase the viability of their farms and make them more money over the longer term.

Anyone watching ABCs Landline must realise the movement of consumers in driving producers to encompass Landcare principals not just on their farms , but indeed across regions.

Gingin's producers are in a unique position to join across the region which is captured between the scarp and the ocean with significant water aquifers and recharge bushland to the north and south intersected by our complex freshwater system of brooks, streams and the southern Moore river.

Gingin Water Group is not the group to realise that commercial opportunity but it can be guided to help monitor the health of that system, communicate its details to the wider community and continue relationships with our NRM agencies to deliver Landcare outcomes as identified by landholders.

To this end GWG has already initiated the process.

We have a grant before the Bendigo bank to assist us to deliver the Community Wetland Monitoring project.

WE have not heard the outcome of such at this time . Please all Bendigo Bank customers , a word in the managers ear this week might not go astray!

WE also made an application for a grant under the Clth Ministers 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Landcare Grant offer. The application closed yesterday , and was lodged on Saturday. We had only 11 days to prepare what I consider was a good application within fairly restricted guidelines. The grant is called "Reconnecting the Gingin Community to Landcare using weed control and Education". If approved it would see the eradication of 10 Ha of invasive weeds (particularly Arum Lilly) along the Gingin Brook bordering the 3 bridges site and the school brook frontage. It would develop a program to re engage the school children and teachers in Landcare work using their own backyard to the Brook and involve some revegetation.

As a committee , we bit the bullet at short notice and hope the community will come on board to commence a more meaningful commitment to Landcare

to complement the work already done to understand the sustainable use of water in our region.

Finally I want to sincerely thank the GWG committee and the wider group of experts of various types ,from a variety of organisations, who have helped me to serve you over the past year.

WE must now elect office bearers and a committee for the coming year.

**Out of general interest , with a show of hands , who amongst us supports the continuation of GWG**

I certainly do not covet the chair , nor do I stand to gain in any material way from it , just the reverse. But I am happy to continue if needed , as are the bulk of the existing committee. John Braid wishes to step aside , but remains supportive and on the end of the phone. Similarly Jill Wilson is overcommitted but is entitled to the exofficio seat from NACC. Lorraine Wyse has offered to rejoin the committee. She has poured the slab of her new home at Wowra Brook. She is an environmental research officer and so has the skills we need for a wetland monitoring project. She also has a bit of time. I support her re inclusion.

I suggest you reappoint the committee en masse with the addition of any other volunteers.

I now stand aside and ask for nominations for the appointment of chair to the GWG Inc.

**I thank you for your attention and remind you that a \$10 family membership is now payable. Terry will take it tonight or you can internet transfer it to our Bendigo account. Details on the Membership application form..I have copies..or details on the website.**

**David Rickson Hon Chairman**

**October 2014**