

Katherine PFAS Community Consultation Group

COMMUNIQUE

17 October 2017

The first meeting of the Katherine PFAS Community Consultation Group (KPCCG) was held on 17 October 2017 at the Katherine Government Centre from 5:30pm to 7:45pm.

The following is a record of key aspects of the meeting.

Purpose

Discussion regarding the purpose and formation of the KPCCG. It is intended that the KPCCG provide advice on what information is needed for community members to make informed decisions and formulate key messaging in order to provide accurate information.

Terms of Reference

Chair sought feedback and suggestions relating to the Terms of Reference.

The role of the PFAS Inter Agency Steering Committee was explained to meeting attendees. The major role of the Steering Committee is to lead the NT Government input into the Commonwealth led Inter Governmental Agreement (IGA) and the development and implementation of a strategy that will be used to manage PFAS-related issues in the NT. The option for minutes and actions of the KPCCG to go direct to the PFAS Task Force, within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, was also discussed.

Members discussed inviting alternative members to join the KPCCG.

Members discussed meeting frequency and agreed that a mailing list needs to be established to enable the Chair to disseminate relevant information in a timely manner.

Members agreed that an amendment be made to the Terms of Reference to allow the Chair to call an out of session meeting as required.

Members discussed the importance of having a direct line of communication with the Australian Government/Minister responsible and/or local MP, MLA or Senator.

Members agreed that an 'welcome to country' be added to the standing agenda.

Actions:

- All agreed that a visual representation of the governance structure, relationship between KPCCG, PFASISC, PFAS Task Force and politicians needs to be developed

- All agreed that actions and information from KPCCG be disseminated to all NT politicians, independents and opposition
- Follow up with members who did not attend or respond to invitation to join KPCCG and enquire whether they wish to accept their offer of appointment or not
- Discuss membership appointments at next meeting and seek recommendations for community representatives
- Establish mailing list for out of session information
- Chair discretion to call out of session meeting if required
- Add welcome to country to Agenda.

Department of Defence update

Update provided on key actions being undertaken in regards to activities on the base and in the community. RAAF Base Tindal pool is open for community use. Defence are providing ongoing monitoring of PFAS levels in the Tindal pool. Rainwater tank program progressing well.

Contacted every school and offered bore and soil testing.

Defence Community Liaison Officer available for individual or organisation information sessions.

Members were offered an invitation for a site visit to RAAF Base Tindal prior to one of the KPCCG meetings.

Members were informed that a 150KL allocation from town potable water supply is available for residents that have water tanks installed. Defence aims to have all tanks installed by the start of the wet season. Defence provided information regarding the allocation of potable water for water tanks installed.

Actions

- School Principals are seeking talking points and clear messaging suitable for inclusion in newsletters, around potable water supply
- Responsibility: DCM Strategic Communications and Engagement in consultation with Power and Water Corporation and Dept. of Health
- Address concerns regarding the safety of water by providing and making available accurate and detailed information.

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Department of Health update

Provided background on development of the national Health Base Guidance Values released by the Commonwealth on 3 April 2017 and explained the difference between the setting of a standard and a guideline.

An information paper was provided to members in response to media reports regarding the incidence of cancer in Katherine. Members were advised that the next cancer incidence analysis is expected to be released in December 2017.

Members discussed the Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA) that will identify exposure pathways and that it is anticipated to be available in April 2018. Members discussed the importance of fast tracking blood tests for Katherine residents in advance of the release of the (HHRA).

Members were provided information regarding national PFAS related guidelines and associated fact sheets and guidance statements and that these are available on line at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-pfas-hbgv.htm>.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand has also issued a recent statement on PFAS and fruit which will be forwarded to the Secretariat for distribution to members.

Tailored Frequently Asked Questions for Katherine document was also distributed to members.

Actions:

- Members formally request that blood testing is made available as a priority to establish a baseline, particularly for those people living in a high risk area.
- Members request that further investigation be undertaken into causal effects.

Power and Water Corporation update

Information sheet provided to members covering:

- Current PFAS levels in tap water
- Water smart program statistics
- Water usage statistics and treatment plant capability
- PFAS removal equipment
- Communications and media activity

Action:

- Request to provide dates for when testing was conducted.
- Provide monthly statistics for tap and bore tests
- Use micro grams per litre instead of ppm as a unit of measurement to keep data consistent
- Responsibility: Power and Water Corporation

- Seek feedback on any additional information that needs to be captured to keep messaging accurate, relevant and consistent.

Other Business

KTC Pool

Members were provided an update on the Katherine Town Council pool.

Plan has been endorsed - taking water out to be put in sewerage system, filters to be cleaned; approx. 2 week process.

Investigating alternative filtration system

Members discussed information from the KPCCG meeting that could be discussed on Katherine 8KTR radio.

Members agreed that 8KTR has been asked to put forward the position of the group as a whole rather than singling out individual members.

Members agreed that 8KTR consider continuing with guest speakers.

Members discussed membership and conflicts of interest. Members agreed that it would be appropriate for any member to step down from the KPCCG at any time should they feel the need to do so.

Action:

- Request to provide details on KTC pool filtration system to members
- Request to provide weekly updates on pool testing to be made available to the public
- Chair requested that feedback on the first meeting be emailed through to secretariat
- Chair requested that members consider providing suggestions on subject matter experts for presentations and priorities to the KPCCG
- KPCCG members that didn't attend or respond to invitation will be contacted to gauge their level of interest and participation in the group.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in Katherine on Tuesday 14 November 2017

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KPCCG Membership		
Members Present	Representing	Organisation
Anthony Bartlett	Community	
Robert Jennings	Local Government	Katherine Town Council
Meg Geritz	Community	8KTR Community Radio
Allan Domaschenz	Community	
Fay Miller	Local Government	Katherine Town Council
Xavier Schobben	NT Government	Dept of Health
Matthew Clarke		Dept of Defence
Chris Horton		Power Water Corporation
Andrew Tatnell		Australian Defence Force
Jake Quinlivan – Chair	NT Government	Dept of the Chief Minister
Nathanael Knapp – Secretariat	NT Government	Dept of the Chief Minister
Kim Wheatley	NT Government	Dept of the Chief Minister
Karen Vohland	NT Government	Dept of the Chief Minister
 Guests		
 Apologies		
Errol Lawson	Community	
Petrena Ariston	Community	
Eslyn Fletcher		Katherine Regional Aboriginal Health & Related Services
Johannes Grimbeek	NT Government	Dept of Health
 Absent or No Response to Invitation		
Sue Jones	Community	Katherine Chamber of Commerce
Kevin Grey	Community	Katherine Chamber of Commerce
Natalie Ellis	Community	
Merlyn Smith	Community	
Lisa Mumbin	Community	
Warren De With	Community	
Craig Stevens	Community	