Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group
Meeting No 6 – 10 May 2021

Communique

The Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group (AWEAG) held its sixth meeting on Monday 10 May 2021 at Prime House. Mike Rowe, Director General of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation chaired the meeting.

Main items discussed include the following:

Member Stories

Members shared stories and lessons learned from engagement with Government and industry (including the Department). Members noted challenges associated with lack of clarity in decision making when navigating across government structures and emphasised the importance of genuine consultation in early stages of development. Members also highlighted the challenges associated with defining and interpreting terminology

licence allocations to be adjusted depending on the changing availability. The Minister noted that the RIWI Act is inadequate when seeking to develop Strategic Aboriginal Water Reserves. Minister Kelly committed to sharing more detail on the principles of the new bill with the group.

Members noted the need for the legislation to consider the drying climate and the need to manage water sustainably. Members also highlighted the need for the Department to improve its cultural competency and have more discussions around the cultural and spiritual values related to water.

Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson, Minister for Environment

Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson, Minister for Environment and Climate Action sent her apologies. Cameron Barnes (Environmental advisor) and Marije Van Hemert (Climate change advisor) represented the Minister.

Members were informed about key priorities in the environment portfolio which include focus on learning how best to consult and seek feedback from Traditional Owners when developing and/or expanding new maritime and terrestrial parks. The Minister wants to include local communities into management programs via links to Aboriginal Ranger programs and focus on young, marginalised members of the community. The Government is seeking to build