

# HERBERT RIVER IMPROVEMENT TRUST

## *SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES*

TUESDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2009  
AT 9.00 A.M.



### **A. ATTENDANCE –**

Present were Mr. W.H. Pickering (Chairperson), Cr. P. Lynch (Member), Cr. G.P. Gianotti (Member), Mr. P. Britton and Mr. T. Reynolds (Invitee – Rockfield Technologies Australia Pty. Ltd.), Mr. B.E. Leach (Trust Engineer), Mr. R.W. Clark (Trust Secretary) and Mr. S. Hall (Trust Works Manager).

Lower Herbert Water Management Authority (LHWMA) Mr. R. Bosworth, Mr. M. Pisano, Mr. S. Girgenti, Mr. R. Quabba, Mr. G. Accornero and Mr. R. Pietrobon.

Canegrowers Herbert River Manager, Mr. P. Sheedy and Farmers Mr. D. Carr, Mr. A. Girgenti, Mr. C. Girgenti, Mr. D. Pearson and Mr. M. Porta,

Ripple Creek Farmers, Mr. C. Cristaldi and Mr. L. Cristaldi attended the meeting at 11.00 a.m.

### **B. PURPOSE –**

Information Session regarding Catherina Creek Floodgate and Ripple Creek Floodgate.

### **C. GENERAL BUSINESS –**

1. The Trust Chairperson, Mr. Bill Pickering provided a background on the history of the automation of the floodgates and the events leading up to the appointment of Rockfield Technologies Australia Pty. Ltd. (RTA) to finalise the commissioning of the automation of the floodgates.

Mr. Pickering advised that the Trust has now implemented the automation of the gates project in accordance with the requirements given to the Trust in mid 2005 by the SIIP Project Committee following the closure of the SIIP funding program. He also noted that the automation of the gates came about primarily to address the following concerns:-

- Concern by landholders that the current flap gates did not allow drainage in low flow situations; and
- Concern by environmentalists that the flap gates closed too early to allow fish migration upstream of the floodgates.

Mr. P. Britton then provided a summary of the works undertaken by RTA necessary to commission the automation and presented copies of their Report on the commissioning and recommendations for future maintenance. Copies of this Report were provided to those present at the meeting.

Trust Engineer, Mr. B. Leach then detailed the setting of the levels at which the gates operate automatically and also that in the event of a power outage, while there is a manual system provided to raise or lower the gates, the Trust has no process or procedures in place for doing this.

The meeting then raised a number of issues and comments for discussion as follows:-

- *Levels of Automation Activation*

The meeting accepted the current level of activation parameters on the basis that the system will be monitored during the next wet season and this will give data to establish whether or not those parameters can be changed to maximise drainage of the upstream sides of the gates, while not compromising the other objective of ensuring fish migration upstream.

- *Manual Operation*

Landholders present indicated an interest in being trained in the manual operation of the gates during power outages and the Trust Engineer will liaise with them regarding setting up an operating protocol with the Lower Herbert Water Management Authority (LHWMA) on manual operations. RTA will be involved in setting up this process.

- *Manual Indicator on Gates*

It was noted that the Catherina Creek gate will be fitted with an indicator (golf flag stick) which will be used to indicate the position of the gates when manual operation is needed.

- *Telemetry System for Power Failure*

The LHWMA will write to the Trust asking for an investigation of the availability and cost to install a telemetry system at the site that will advise an appropriate contact when power outage occurs at the site. The Trust is prepared to engage RTA to investigate such a system, however the Trust Chairperson indicated that the Trust would see the cost of installing and operating a system as the responsibility of the LHWMA. The LHWMA Chairperson indicated that they would be prepared to accept that cost if it was reasonable, and appropriate after hours contact arrangements were acceptable to all parties.

- *Ripple Creek Floodgate*

The Chairperson reiterated the history of the floodgate automation for the benefit of Messrs. Cristaldi which was followed by a brief overview by Mr. P. Britton and Mr. B. Leach.

The Ripple Creek landholders present also expressed an interest in being trained in the manual activation process during power outages.

**D. INSPECTIONS** – The meeting adjourned at 12.45 p.m. for lunch and resumed at 2.00 p.m. with the Trust carrying out inspections at a number of sites in the Lower Herbert area as follows:-

- The Trust met with Mr. G. Adams and viewed riverbank damage adjacent to his land at 10 Eddleston Drive, Cordelia. This damage has been recorded as new damage by the Trust and it was explained to Mr. Adams the process that the Trust will have to go through to try and source additional State Government funding to assist with the repair of this damage.
- The Trust met with Mrs. Heard at 18 River Avenue, Halifax and inspected the levee bank which showed a couple of areas need attention following minor breaching during the February, 2009 flood event. Mrs. Heard advised that they would have had water inside their house only for them being able to keep it out using a board and silastic barrier. In her opinion the water level inside their yard permeated through the levee wall and the ground, and the pump was unable to reduce the level.

- The Trust met with Mr. C. Bigwood and Mr. V. Amory at 17 and 15 River Avenue, Halifax respectively, whom pointed out problems experienced during the flood event caused in Mr. Bigwood's case by his pipe outlet malfunctioning and his outboard motor (pump) being damaged.
- The Trust inspected the Halifax levee bank adjacent to Mr. J. Carruthers property at 45 Mona Road, Halifax however the Trust did not meet with Mr. Carruthers.
- The Trust met with Mr. R. and W. Tonto of Taylors Beach Road, Halifax and Mr. S. Fudriga and discussed with them the issue of high levels in the river at Halifax which resulted in them receiving record flood levels through their farm areas. Funding has now been secured under the Natural Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP) to carry out further modelling of the Lower Herbert area of the Herbert River to determine why river levels at Halifax have increased, and to use this information for future education and awareness and prevent further levee building in the Herbert River area and consequent downstream impacts. The Trust undertook to keep them informed of progress in relation to the flood modelling.

E. **CONCLUSION** – The meeting concluded at 5.00 p.m.

(Sgd) Mr. W.H. Pickering,  
**TRUST CHAIRPERSON.**