



Day 11 Activity
Tales of the Todd

Tales of the Todd Role Profiles

Role #23 Government - Water Advisory Group

The Alice Springs Water Advisory Group has invited you to become a member. You attend meetings and assist with decision making about water issues around town. You also liaise with the media to alert the general population about issues that are raised before the WAG.

Background

This group is made up of representatives of various agencies such as PowerWater, the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment, Arid Lands Environment Centre, Town Council and other interested community members. It is intended for the group to provide opportunities for all the people in town involved with water issues to be able to share their perspectives. This group also has an education role, trying to keep the general public aware of local water issues.

Effects on the river system

As the town has grown, it is becoming obvious that water issues cross a lot of decision making boundaries. The actions of this group don't have an immediate effect on the river system, but the decisions they contribute to make assist in conservation in the longer term.

Concerns

If there is not some collaborative control over the use of water in Alice Springs, some people think that there will be big problems in the future. This could include a huge increase in cost, restrictions being placed on many water users as well as loss of quality and significantly increased land degradation such as the effects of salinity.

This group sees itself as being ideally placed to undertake decisions about such control.



Tales of the Todd Role Profiles

Role #24 Government - Water Resource Advisor

You work for the government agency that monitors and implements the water resource laws. You collect and record data about water use and advise users about their rights and responsibilities. You also issue water use licences where they are applicable eg for people pumping their own water from underground.

Background

Once laws about water use are established, someone has to make sure people know about them and ensure that they also act within the law.

Effects on the river system

The actions of this group don't have an immediate effect on the river system, but the decisions they contribute to make assist in conservation in the longer term.

Concerns

Some people don't know about water laws, or don't understand the reasons for them. In the old days, people could make their own decisions about how they used water and the river system, and usually it didn't cause immediate or obvious problems. With a growing population, it is no longer possible for this to happen as the actions of each person always impact on others.



Tales of the Todd Role Profiles

Role #25 Government – Bridges and Causeways

You work for the government department that builds and maintains bridges and causeways across the Todd. You haven't always done this job, but you have worked for the government in Alice Springs for three years. You plan on staying for a few more years before moving on.

Background

Until the early 1980s the only way for vehicles to cross the Todd River was by sealed causeways close to town or by unsealed tracks elsewhere. Other than that there was a footbridge built beside the Wills Terrace causeway. When the river was in full flood, people had to leave their cars on one side of the river and walk across to be met by friends on the other side.

Since then a large all-weather bridge has been built just south of town, named after John Blakeman. There is also a substantial raised cement causeway at the turnoff to the casino. The other causeways are still at road level and are closed as soon as the river starts to flow.

Effects on the river system

The casino causeway causes that most problems because it restricts the flow of water and also collects floating debris. It can also be damaged by the force of water.

Concerns

People are more of a problem than the bridges and causeways themselves. Many people travelling through central Australia don't expect the force of water that comes with flooding of a dry river system and get washed away trying to cross.



Tales of the Todd Role Profiles

Role #26 Government - Town Council

You work for the local council as environment officer and it is your role to maintain public areas such as the dry river bed and its environs. You don't always do it yourself, but oversee contractors who undertake the jobs needed such as rubbish collection, weeding and mowing and general maintenance.

Background

The town council has the responsibility of keeping the town looking good and making sure it is a healthy place for its citizens, as well as for visitors to the town as tourism is an important industry.

Effects on the river system

The actions of this group are perhaps the most noticeable of all, because if they don't do their job there will be an accumulation of rubbish and overgrown vegetation.

Concerns

Many townspeople see the job of maintaining the health and safety of public places like the Todd River as entirely the job of 'the government' to whom we pay rates and taxes. While this is in part true, if community members displayed pride in their town and volunteered to assist with some of these jobs, there could be a much greater 'community feeling' in the town.