

Gwydir Customer Advisory Group

TO BE RATIFIED AT MARCH 2018 MEETING

Minutes of Meeting Thursday 30 August 2018 WaterNSW Conference Room 66-68 Frome St, Moree

Present: Joe Robinson (Chair), Nick Gillingham, Michael Seery, Jim Cush, Mark Winter, Daryl Albertson, Neil Foster (observer), Zara Lowien (observer), Jonathan Dickson, Dan Berry, Andrew Scott, Ken Gee, Madeleine Hartley, Emma Oates, Enrico Proietti and Toni Hayes (minutes).

Ronan Magaharan, Andrew Fraser, Mark Clayton and Graham Begg attended via Skype for specific agenda items.

Meeting Opened: 9.00am.

Welcome and introductions.

1. **Apologies:** Sam Heagney, David Reibel, Mark Taylor, Lindsay White, Paul Maisey.

Confirmation of Chairperson

The Gwydir CAG agreed to continue Chairmanship of Joe Robinson to the end of the current term of office, 30 June 2019.

2. **Confirmation of Agenda Items:**

- Refer to agenda item 10.
- Customers requested NRAR be invited to the next meeting to outline its aims and objectives.
- Telemetry discussed. Customers noted that the regulator is enforcing rules for telemetry without having the capability in place to accommodate. iWAS in its current form will not cope with telemetry, however there is already some expertise in place which we may be able to use (eg currently trialling Goanna in the Border Rivers).
- Concerns raised by customers that the regulator does not know what is required in advance and who will be the collection point. WaterNSW advised that it has been raising this for some time with the regulator and seeking clear direction for what is in the rules and what is out and that capabilities need to be in place prior to implementation of rules.

3. **Declaration of Interest(s):**

- Declarations of interest were sought from attendees in relation to the meeting's agenda items. No interests were declared. Items included in the agenda are not considered confidential unless declared as such.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting, 1 March 2018:**

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on 1 March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.

*D Albertson/J Cush
carried*

5. **Actions arising from minutes:**

- See action sheet attached.
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6. Water Delivery

6.1 Water System Operations Report (K Gee)

- WaterNSW provided a presentation on the operations plan for the Gwydir, including storage, supplementary access, water availability, rainfall, inflows, operational loss, storage forecasts, outage planning and prognosis. The plan is publicly available on WaterNSW's website at <http://www.waturnsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations>.
- The block release strategy will consist of three defined releases. The first release is planned for Mehi (early-mid Oct), Moomin (early-mid Oct), Carole/Gil Gil (mid-late Oct), then will hold off until early December with a final release a couple of weeks later to pick up remaining volumes. There is not a lot of water to push around. A total of 5-6000ML will be delivered to the Carole.
- D Albertson sought to gauge irrigator interest/support for a delivery of irrigation water earlier than the planned October block release, highlighting potential system water savings being early season cooler conditions, recent small rainfall around Moree and current environmental flows in the main Gwydir River. Whilst this was acknowledged, strong feedback from customer representatives was to proceed with the current planned October block release. Moving irrigation plans forward is not a likely outcome.
- Copeton Dam storage roster discussed. To be discussed out of session with GVIA.
- Inflows are slightly worse than worst case for 6-month period.

6.2 Computer Aided River Management (CARM) Update (D Berry)

- CARM is a computer modelling system WaterNSW is implementing to better provide forecasting, event flows, tributary modelling and water order/usage projections.
- CARM Lite models are now being developed. The lite models have the same modelling functions to predict tribute inflows and river operations but lack more detailed knowledge around where water is going due to the lack of telemetered meters. The system will be set up to allow for this future function if it becomes available.
- Customers advised there is no rereg in the Gwydir so questioned how CARM would be of benefit, indicating telemetry would provide more accurate forecasting and losses. WaterNSW advised that CARM will assist with information in forecasting more accurate demand from orders and rain fall events.
- CARM is currently in operation in the Murrumbidgee and CARM Lite will be rolled out across all regulated valleys, with the Gwydir currently in the development stage.

7. System Operation and Asset Services

7.1 Asset Maintenance and Services Update (R Magaharan)

- Asset performance and maintenance in the Gwydir presented and discussed, including safety improvements, defects, maintenance and upcoming works.

8. Presentations/Consultation

8.1 Drought Response (J Dickson)

- As part of the NSW Government's Emergency Drought Relief, a rebate of up to \$4000 per licence for the **fixed component** of bills on general security and some supplementary licences will apply to **future** invoices.

- For regulated river customers, the rebate will be applied equally over the next four bills. For unregulated and groundwater customers, the rebate will be applied to the next bill for 2017/18. High security and government licences are excluded.
- Visit <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/droughthub/emergency-drought-relief-package> for more information.
- Customers noted that those who have been efficient and consolidated licences will be disadvantaged by the rebate (receive only one rebate) and believe it should be based on a per/ML basis. Has not been thought through and is not addressing customers with the most critical needs. Seems to be no understanding of the issues and no consultation with stakeholders prior to introducing.
- Customers also queried why groundwater users are eligible for the rebate when they are getting 100% allocation. It was noted that not all groundwater users across the state have full allocation, however customers believe the rebate should be based on a % of allocation (if below a certain % would be eligible).

8.2 Regulatory Update (J Dickson)

Reform Update

- WaterNSW provided a recap on the water reform process to date. Draft WRAP regulations have been released and ongoing consultation with the Taskforce continues.

Ownership of Meters

- WaterNSW currently owns and maintains meters in the southern valleys and Nepean and Bega systems. Metering legislation passed in June 2018 created a framework under which a transfer of ownership may occur.
- WaterNSW acknowledges there are transitional issues to be worked through and is actively involved in preparing a framework.

Metering Policy

- The Taskforce is currently preparing a list of NMI-approved pattern approved meters. WaterNSW is seeking direction from the Taskforce to publish this on our website as per requests from our customers.
- WaterNSW's submission to the metering framework has been published at https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/162505/Water-reformconsultation-submission-178.pdf
- Draft metering regulations have now been released by the Taskforce. GVIA has raised a number of concerns with the draft metering policy and will raise with DOI Water at the Taskforce meeting this afternoon.
- Compliance discussed. Customers again raised the issue of WaterNSW speaking out on behalf of customer regarding compliance. GVIA advised that it has been proactive in getting the message out for the Gwydir.
- Customers noted that a single meter type is not the answer and that individual customer choice should be available.
- WaterNSW advised that it has had discussions with the regulator and believe there needs to be consolidation around data collection and potential consolidation in the market.

8.3 Pricing Determinations (J Dickson)

- The **WAMC pricing determination** runs 2016-20 with functions split between DOIW, NRAR and WaterNSW. New pricing submissions are due by 30 June 2019 from each agency.
- The **rural valleys pricing determination** runs from 2017-21, with submissions due to IPART 30 June 2020. WaterNSW will seek involvement from the CAGs on price modelling in early 2019. We will again seek to continue the journey towards customer choice.
- **IPART Cost Share Review:** IPART is reviewing how the costs of providing rural bulk water services is shared between water users and the NSW Government, following a beneficiary pays or impactor pays framework.
- A draft report is due in October 2018 with final report due February 2019. Any changes will impact the next WAMC and Rural Pricing Determinations and customers are urged to be involved in the process.
- With four determinations on the landscape (WAMC, W2BH, Greater Sydney and Rural), WaterNSW will be seeking customer input via CAGs from February 2019 to June 2020.
- Some customers have indicated a preference for CAGs to meet face to face more frequently than twice per year and as such WaterNSW will hold three face-to-face meetings in 2019.

8.4 Levels of Service (LOS) Project Update (A Fraser)

- A workshop was held with Gwydir customers on 21 August in Moree which was very informative in identifying potential projects. WaterNSW will hold another workshop early 2019 where we will have more detail on impacts of identified projects and seek customer support to take forward.
- WaterNSW is about to engage a consultant to assist with the Future Trends study, high-level costing and economic analysis and will commence a LOS gap analysis and options development.
- The aim of workshop is to gain customer support for capital projects prior to the next determination.
- Differences between the LOS project and the WRP (DOIW) process discussed. DOIW is reviewing the WRPs as part of the MDBA and is a separate piece of work to the LOS project. WaterNSW is looking at the operation of the valley in order to do asset work focussed on operating solutions. The WRPs address the rules of the valley. Some of the operations will interact with the rules and WaterNSW is liaising closely with DOIW, however the processes are separate.
- WaterNSW is developing Strategic Business Case projects for the Gwydir which is occurring in parallel with DOIW's Regional Strategies for these valleys. WaterNSW is working closely with Darcy Moore who is managing the development of the regional strategies for DOIW. WaterNSW is very aware that the process needs to be as integrated as possible so the operations achieve the outcomes.

8.5 State Infrastructure Strategy (SIS) Priority Catchment Project (A Fraser)

- The 2014 NSW State Infrastructure Strategy (SIS) identified the Macquarie and Gwydir valleys as priority catchments. WaterNSW has been funded to develop a preliminary business case to identify, analyse and recommend a preferred option/s for addressing identified water supply issues in the valley and guide future infrastructure investment in the valley.
- WaterNSW has engaged a delivery partner to assist in developing a business case and will establish a stakeholder advisory group to be a key form of communication between the local community, stakeholder organisations and the project team throughout the development process.

8.6 Burrendong Temperature Curtain Update (M Clayton)

- Following extensive investigations into cause of failure and some subsequent design modifications the curtain was partially reinstated (due to low storage levels) and made operational in August 2018. Full reinstatement and testing will commence once water levels in the storage increases.
- More information is available at <https://www.waternsw.com.au/projects/burrendong>.

8.7 Nimmie-Caira SDL Project (M Clayton)

- The NSW Government acquired 19 parcels of land in Nimmie-Caira (on behalf of the Commonwealth) as an SDL project associated with the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan. WaterNSW operates and maintains 60 assets within the system.
- Out of the 60 impacted assets, only four are located on or near the Murrumbidgee River and are required to deliver water to both the Nimmie-Caira and regulated customers. The other remaining impacted assets are used to manage flows within the Nimmie-Caira system on behalf of the environmental water holders.
- WaterNSW is working with DOI Water to legally discharge its obligations with respect to operating and delivering water within the Nimmie-Caira footprint. No impact is expected to Lowbidgee customers as needs can be met by assets retained by WaterNSW.
- WaterNSW will divest the assets back to DOI Water. We may have future involvement in operating/maintaining the assets however this is unknown at this stage. We won't have ownership.

8.8 Fish Passage Ministerial Taskforce Update (M Clayton)

- WaterNSW provided an update on the Fish Passage Ministerial Taskforce (as discussed at previous meetings). A strategic business case has been drafted with target completion October 2018 and approval process 2018/19.

8.9 Local Water Utility (LWU) Monitoring Review (G Begg)

- WaterNSW provided an update on the LWU Monitoring Review. Forty-two surveys have been completed to date.
- Emerging themes include strong interest in an active notification mechanism, potential for WaterNSW to act as a hub for data sharing and potential to supplement monitoring program by adding instruments to existing hydrometric stations.
- Review to be completed December 2018 with an update to be provided to CAGs early 2019.

8.10 Wentworth to Broken Hill Pipeline (W2BHP) Update (J Dickson)

- WaterNSW provided an update on the W2BH Pipeline Project. Completion of pump stations is well progressed and project currently on track for completion at the end of the year.

8.11 CAG Term of Office (J Dickson)

- The current CAG term of office ends 30 June 2019. WaterNSW will call for nominations for the 2019-2022 CAG during February 2019.
- WaterNSW encourages current members to renominate and invites other interested customers to nominate through their respective nominating organisations/water user groups.

9. Reports

Noted and taken as read.

10. General Business

10.1 Discussion of Carole Creek demand/supply and deliveries (Aug/Sep) (D Albertson)

- Refer to agenda item 6.1.

Meeting Review and Close:

Next Meetings: eCAG: Wednesday 28 November 2018 (Skype)

Face to face: Thursday 14 March 2019 (Moree)

Meeting closed: 11.55am

DRAFT

Carried Forward Actions

Action No. yymm.action no	Action	Responsibility	Status
GWY1803.02	Question on Notice: will customers get to see the draft CWP strategy prior to going to the Board for endorsement? OEH would like to see intentions of strategy prior to any finalisation.	A Fraser	<p>Complete. WaterNSW advised that there is no requirement for the strategy to go to the Board for endorsement.</p> <p>WaterNSW is currently running an options assessment to start to populate some of the strategy. Customer Advisory Groups will be updated on the process as it progresses.</p> <p>There is a CWP group which is briefed regularly by WaterNSW, of which OEH is a part of.</p>

New Actions

Action No. yymm.action no	Action	Responsibility	Status
	Nil new actions.		