

Macquarie-Cudgegong Customer Advisory Group - Minutes of Meeting



Location: WaterNSW, Blueridge Business Park, DUBBO

Date: 27 February 2019

Time: 9.30am

Present: Michael Egan (Chair), Rick Reid, Peter Schuster, Lindsay White, Paul Keyte, Chris Hogendyk, Bill Tyrwhitt, Michael Bennett, Tony Quigley, David Stockler, Jonathan Dickson, Dan Berry, Sri Sritharan, Mahmood Khan, Emma Oates and Toni Hayes (minutes).

Michael Barratt attended for agenda items 2.3 & 2.4.
Steve Hamson attended for agenda item 3.1.

Meeting Opened: 9.30am.

1. Welcome and introductions:

1.1 Confirmation of Agenda Items

- Additional agenda items tabled at General Business.

1.2 Apologies

- Tim Hosking, Lyn Davies, Rob Tuck, Stewart Crawford, Brad Cam, Chris Devitt, Frank McKillop, Grant Tranter.

1.3 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.

1.4 Minutes of Previous Meeting, 12 September 2018

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on 12 September 2018 be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.

*T Quigley/L White
carried*

1.5 Actions arising from minutes

- See action sheet attached.

2. Water Delivery:

2.1 Water System Operations Report (M Khan)

WaterNSW presented the operations plan for the Macquarie-Cudgegong, including water availability, resource assessment distribution, inflows, operational surplus and storage forecast. The plan is publicly available on WaterNSW's website at www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations.

2.2 Operational Drought Update (D Berry)

- Extreme event policy principles, extreme events stages and hierarchy of water priorities presented.

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- Water sources drought status update presented for NSW water sources. Macquarie is operating under stage 3 (severe drought). Southern valleys are still operating to WSP rules (stage 1, normal operations).
- Critical Water Advisory Panels (CWAP) have been established in the northern inland regulated river valleys and the Barwon-Darling/Lower Darling to advise on appropriate management actions in extreme events. Will commence in southern valleys in due course.
- To support local input for the CWAP meetings, WaterNSW intends to form local panels by valley, for local operational and drought input. As drought continues, this group will make recommendations and provide advice to WaterNSW for DoIW as to how inflows should be shared/distributed etc and provide valuable input to the CWAP formed by DoIW. WaterNSW will establish these groups based on the severity of conditions, as drought extends through the state.
- **Current situation:** Namoi and Macquarie-Cudgegong system inflows and water allocations graphs presented and discussed. Customers noted that carryover is not well understood in the general public and questioned if it would be better written as 'irrigators banked water to use when it is dry' rather than presented in graphs.
- **Situation at Menindee:** presented and discussed Barwon-Darling flows vs extraction graphs; water losses July 2016-January 2019; northern valley storages graphs; Darling River flows; Menindee Lakes storage operations and volumes.
- **Why are we in this situation:** NSW rainfall and temperature graphs and comparison of drought inflows (Burrendong, Copeton, Keepit and Split Rock dams).
- Further information is available on WaterNSW's website at waternsw.com.au/supply/drought-information/regional-nsw/macquarie-valley

Drought Operations Measures Macquarie (refer to Operations Plan, p25-26) (S Sritharan)

Windamere Drought Plan - Zero Inflow (Jan 2019 – Mar 2020)

- Phase 1 of bulk water transfer of 10GL completed. At the end of the transfer, 132GL remains in storage. Phase 2 (40GL) will commence November 2019.
- At the start of the 2019/20 water year there will be 120GL held in Windamere. The likely allocation will be 100% to local water utilities and high security. The carryover will be able to be delivered for general security.
- Customers questioned whether the drought protocol came in prior to trading. Discussed. There is potential for trading to be suspended, as has happened in the past.

Macquarie Drought Plan – Zero Inflow and Drought of Record (Jan 2019 – May 2020)

- At end of June 2019, Burrendong is likely to be 4% (46GL of active water). Not enough to manage next year, even with drought of record inflows, to deliver town water supply and S&D.
- By September 2019, will need to implement drought operations. If no inflows, operations likely to be under extreme events stage 4 (critical drought/water shortage). Means delivering town water supply only. WaterNSW will make plans to pump dead storage.
- There is an option for additional transfers from Windamere (will still hold 70GL) however will be a Ministerial decision.
- Customers asked, when do we start to consider the following year? Priority sequence – town water supply, then high security, then look at general security. Will be a discussion with the proposed drought committee. Will need a plan in place before it happens so can implement as it happens.
- WaterNSW is working with key stakeholders to manage each stage.

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2.3 Water Insight Portal (M Barratt)

- Preparation is underway of a valley by valley website which will be a single, interactive dashboard for customers to use to aid on-farm decisions, including storage, water quality, allocation, distribution, inter-valley trade, tributary flow, rainfall, news/updates. Expected to be available May/June 2019.
- Customers provided the following suggestions for inclusion: option to select date range, commentary on who's flows in the river (for general public information, ie e-water etc); specific alerts/warnings; EOS flow data.
- Feedback and suggestions can be provided to Toni.Hayes@waternsw.com.au.

2.4 Operational Loss Update (M Barratt)

- During the last round of CAGs, customers requested WaterNSW present a breakdown of operational and system losses in Operations Plans going forward.
- A project has commenced to investigate this, however the detail required by valley is significant and complex. This will be a longer-term project.
- Overview of project and progress provided. Updates will be provided to the CAG as the project develops.
- Customers noted that will need to include efficiencies on effluent creeks as well and value of losses needs to be quantified as well.

2.5 Drought Response (J Dickson)

- Critical Water Advisory Panels (CWAP) have commenced in the north, with the south to follow in due course.
- WaterNSW has heightened its communications to customers on the drought, including publishing valley-specific information on drought; weekly commentary on greatest impacted valleys and critical issues commentary. We have also increased engagement with other water agencies.
- Customers can subscribe to weekly updates at waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/subscribe.
- **Coming soon:** WSP/WRP changes mid-term – WaterNSW is in discussions with DoIW to establish a forum for stakeholder input on proposed changes/effects to the WRP mid-term. Potentially will be an agenda item at CAGs going forward to discuss, understand and suggest changes as they arise.
- Discussion occurred around how this will work, what would be involved, what constitutes "majority support". Agreed that a secure process for change is important to get reform in the absence of no change possible.

3. Assets

3.1 Asset Maintenance and Services Update (S Hamson)

- Asset performance and maintenance in the Macquarie-Cudgegong presented and discussed, including safety improvements, asset performance, maintenance delivery 2018/19, breakdown/defects and other items of note.
- Marebone fishway automation – work will commence in April. It is expected that the work will take about 2 months to complete and be done before the end of the water year.

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4. Presentations/Consultation

4.1 Compliance (J Dickson)

- At the request of members during the last CAG round, the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) will meet with CAG members immediately after the CAG meeting to discuss with NRAR its strategic priorities and direction.

4.2 NSW Government Fixed Fee Rebate Update (J Dickson)

- A total of 34,114 customers have received rebates to date as well as customers of eight irrigation corporations. Rebates will continue to be issued for the balance of this water year.
- For **regulated** customers, the rebate will be applied equally over four bills, commencing Q4 of the last water year.
- For **unregulated** and **groundwater** customers, the rebate will be applied to the next bill (covering 2017/18 charges).
- High Security and Government Agencies are excluded from the rebate.
- Go to dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/droughthub for more information.

4.3 Regulatory Update (J Dickson)

Reform Update

- WaterNSW provided an update on water reform, including work in progress on metering and telemetry, Duly Qualified Person (DQP) framework and inactive works. It is intended that by 1 April 2019, all elements will be in place to allow customers to understand if and how meter regulations will apply to them.
- **Metering:** the Task Force and MDBA have released a list of current pattern approved (and potential pattern approved) meters mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/pubs/pattern-approved-non-urban-water-meters.pdf
- **Telemetry:** single framework to be owned by DoIW, equipment to be owned by individuals; cloud-based solution; intent for customers to have access to the data; Data Acquisition Service (DAS) tender underway; intent that all water agencies will access the data.
- **Still to come:** Reasonable Use Guidelines, meter ownership discussion, reporting on non-telemetered meters, DoIW/Task Force engagement.

IPART Cost Share Review

- IPART issued its final report in February 2019. There was no substantial change from the October 2018 draft.
- Findings follow the impactor pays framework. Any increase in Rural and WAMC charges will be worked through the coming Determinations.

4.4 Regulatory Economics – Pricing Determination Engagement Plans (J Dickson)

WAMC Determination

- The current WAMC determination runs 2016-2020, with functions split between DoIW, NRAR and WaterNSW. On the current timetable, new pricing submissions are due by 30 June 2019 by each agency.
- WRAP recommendations delayed separation of duties and responsibilities, however outline of division of duties between agencies has now been agreed.
- Formal engagement on pricing options is planned for May 2019 and WaterNSW proposes to engage with customers in each valley throughout May.

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Rural Valleys Determination

- The Rural Valleys Determination runs from 2017-2021, with submissions due to IPART 30 June 2020.
- WaterNSW will be seeking customer involvement in price modelling in early 2019. Engagement will follow the CAG format, with additions as required.

4.5 iWAS Update (J Dickson)

iWAS Improvements

- Coming soon: apportioning usage by Licence/Works; easier access to iWAS information for customers; carryover forecast by account; amending water orders within lead times.

Carryover Campaign

- WaterNSW's carryover campaign was a huge success last year with strong customer feedback on saving them on forfeiture. WaterNSW will run the campaign again this year, with new functionality in iWAS showing potential carryover.

Ordering water – amending orders within lead time

- An issue was identified with iWAS only allowing users to order, amend or cancel a water order during business hours. There is an opportunity within iWAS to enable users to amend orders out of hours **within lead time** window to ensure water take has a compliant order. This will be trialled in the Lachlan valley and if successful will be rolled out to all valleys.

4.6 Your WaterNSW Bill (J Dickson)

- In response to customer feedback, WaterNSW has updated the look and feel of our bill (invoice). We have sought to make understanding invoices easier and summarised charges on one page.
- **New on our website:** you can now access Algal Alerts, operational update notices and supplementary notices from our website homepage. Customers can register to receive specific alerts at waternsw.com.au/supply/regional-nsw/alerts-and-updates

4.7 CAG Term of Office (J Dickson)

- The current term of office for all CAGs expires on 30 June 2019. WaterNSW is calling for nominations for the 2019-22 term during February and March 2019.
- If you wish to continue your representation on the CAG, please liaise with your nominating organisation to register your interest. Nominations close 29 March 2019 and a nomination form has been sent to your nominating organisation.

5. Business Papers:

- Noted and taken as read.

6. General Business

6.1 Action Items (C Hogendyk)

- Concerns raised about how action items are being handled/closed out prior to project completion. Customers want to see actions remain on the action sheet until a project is complete in full.
- WaterNSW advised that on a number of items, activities are scheduled by our teams so we mark them as being complete in the CAG. Customers want them to remain on the action sheet until they are fully closed.
- Suggestions taken on board. WaterNSW will revisit how action items are classified.

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Meeting Review and Close

Next Meeting : Wednesday 3 July 2019

Meeting closed: 1.20pm

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Macquarie-Cudgegong Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 27 February 2019

Carried forward actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
MC1809.02	WaterNSW to report transmission loss by river section in Operations Plans going forward.	A Langdon (M Barratt)	Refer to agenda item 2.4.
MC1809.03	WaterNSW to decide on consistent terminology for Operations Plans for all reports on losses, that clearly breaks down system loss, WSP requirement flow, transmission loss and operational loss.	A Langdon (M Barratt)	Refer to agenda item 2.4.
MC1809.04	WaterNSW to advise if there are any long-term plans to address issues at Gin Gin weir which affect customers in low flow conditions.	R Magaharan	<p>Action complete, works ongoing.</p> <p>There are plans in place to block the lower scour valve when water levels permit. This should keep the weir pool at a higher level during periods of low flows.</p> <p>29/11/18 - Customers sought additional information on when work will be done.</p> <p>WaterNSW is still awaiting suitable water levels in order to access the crest of the weir. Anchor points have already been installed to allow for attachment of fall prevention static line along the crest. The manufacture of components is complete.</p>
MC1809.05	WaterNSW to advise cost of repairs to channel breaches in the North Marsh bypass channel.	R Magaharan	<p>Complete.</p> <p>\$106,760 which includes three weeks for two of our staff and the contractor costs.</p> <p>29/11/18 - Customers sought additional information on when work will be completed.</p> <p>This work has been completed.</p>
MC1811.01	WaterNSW to advise what is happening with the funds previously allocated to desilting of North Macquarie Marsh bypass channel (\$3.2M).	M Clayton	<p>Complete.</p> <p>During the previous pricing period (FY15-FY17) WNSW deferred desilting work on the North Macquarie Marsh</p>

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			<p>bypass channel pending confirmation of the status of the DPI Water pipeline project. WNSW now understands that the DPI Water project is not proceeding. The previous pricing period ended on the 30th of June 2017. The \$3.2m of unspent funds for desilting did not enter the closing RAB at the end of FY17 and are not reflected in current customer prices. An amount for a channel desilting capital project was not included in the submission for the current period.</p> <p>Following further investigation, it was determined that acceptable medium-term performance of the channel can be maintained for the current pricing period through operational maintenance of the channel, and as such major desilting work has been deferred. Under a separate project WNSW will undertake minor capital works to rectify safety issues for regulating structures along the channel over the coming year.</p>
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New actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
	Nil new actions.		

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