

Border Rivers Customer Advisory Group - Minutes of Meeting



Location: Gateway To Training, 15-21 Russell St, GOONDIWINDI

Date: 24 July 2019

Time: 10.30am

Present: David Coultan, Ben Warby, Lindsay White, Michael Owen, Ian Saunders, Anub Nair, Daryl Cleeve, Roland Heatley (observer), David Preston (observer, Skype), David Stockler, Jonathan Dickson, Andrew Scott, Adrian Langdon and Toni Hayes (minutes).

R Walker attended via Skype for agenda item 3.1-3.3.

M Clayton and C Braddock attended for agenda item 3.2.

L Castro attended via Skype for agenda item 4.2.

Meeting Opened: 9.00am.

1. Introduction:

1.1 Welcome and introductions

- Members provided a brief introduction and the water types and entitlements they represent.

1.2 Apologies

- Brett Corish, Daryl Albertson.

1.3 Confirmation of Agenda Items

- Nil new agenda items raised.

1.4 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.

1.5 CAG Member Introduction/Information

- WaterNSW provided an outline CAG roles and responsibilities, role of WaterNSW, CAG format and schedule and CAG member documentation and claims.

1.6 Election of Chairperson

- B Corish was nominated by D Coultan and appointed to the position of Chairperson and CAG Representative unopposed. No other nominations received.

1.7 Minutes of Previous Meeting, 13 March 2019:

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on 13 March 2019 be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.

*D Cleeve/L White
carried*

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1.8 Actions arising from minutes

- See action sheet attached.

2. Water Delivery:

2.1 Water System Operations Report (A Scott)

- WaterNSW presented the operations plan for the Border Rivers including dam storage, water availability, inflows, outage planning and prognosis. The plan is publicly available on WaterNSW's website at www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations.
- Customers questioned what happens when irrigators at the end of the system don't get their water on time (refer also action BR1903.01). WaterNSW classes this as a shortfall, and we are currently working through how to record/report this. There is potential to look at a rereg structure to reduce surplus and manage delivery. Further discussions will be held with the Border Rivers River Operations Stakeholder Consultative Committee (ROSCCo).
- L White provided an update on the outcomes of the northern fish flow event. For further information/updates refer <https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/catchment/northern-fish-flow-2019>. WaterNSW also publishes information on these volumes etc.

Action BR1907.01: WaterNSW to share the link to the Annual Operations Report with the CAG when available.

Responsibility: A Langdon

2.2 Operational Drought Update (A Langdon)

- System inflow vs allocation for the southern valleys, Lachlan and northern valleys; valley drought allocations; available water in accounts at 1 July 2019; and drought contingency measures presented and discussed.
- Customers questioned why figures are reported as carryover when it's either A or B class GS? WaterNSW is highlighting that it is water carried over from previous years that has been stored in the dam (not from inflows). Is effectively the balance brought forward from previous years'.
- Drought contingency measures in the Border Rivers – no delivery of water from storage downstream of Goondiwindi, all water delivered based on tributary inflows in this section.
- WaterNSW will be engaging with the Border Rivers River Operations Stakeholder Consultative Committee (ROSCCo) this afternoon to discuss drought operations/measures in the valley.
- Further information on the drought is available on WaterNSW's website at www.waternsw.com.au/supply/drought-information

3. Assets:

3.1 Asset Maintenance and Services Update (R Walker)

- Asset performance and maintenance in the Border Rivers presented and discussed, including safety improvements, maintenance delivery, breakdown/defects and upcoming works of note.

3.2 Annual Capital Plan (M Clayton)

- Border Rivers forecast, completed and in progress projects and new candidate projects presented and discussed.
- FY22-25 Regulatory Period – WaterNSW will have a draft capital program to present to customers in November with final to be presented March 2020. Submission due 30 June 2020.

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- Customers requested a copy of the plans to raise Pindari Dam by 5 meters so they can take further to progress new infrastructure.
- WaterNSW advised that this project is included in the long-term infrastructure options considered for further investigation to improve security and reliability of supply in the Border Rivers (*raise Pindari Dam full supply level by 5m which could increase storage capacity to 450GL*). It was noted that this work is not funded but is an option at this time.
- A number of potential options are included in WaterNSW's 20 Year Infrastructure Options Study <https://www.waternsw.com.au/projects/infrastructure-studies/20-year-infrastructure-options-study>. A lot of work, analysis and money has been spent developing the strategy and it is hugely valuable to WaterNSW. Will make things happen a lot faster should funding become available.
- Discussed bill impact and how potential projects tie in with LOS and pricing determinations.

Ministerial Taskforce on Fish Passage update

- WaterNSW presented an update on the Ministerial Taskforce, established in July 2017 restoring fish passage and reviewing alternatives to current s218 Fisheries Act legislative obligations.
- A strategic business case was completed end 2018 with final business case now to be prepared, which includes 77 WaterNSW sites (including 11 existing s218 dam safety offset projects currently on hold).
- IPART's *Rural Water Cost Shares Report* proposes a greater user cost share for Environmental Planning and Protection Activity, which includes fishways. The existing 50% customer cost share is proposed by IPART to increase to 80%. In its response, WaterNSW opposed this approach as the changes impact heavily on its customers.
- SDL Northern Basin Environmental Works and Measures Projects update provided. WaterNSW is seeking to get prefeasibility funding to look into potential CWP solutions/options, including multi-level offtake automation at Pindari Dam (\$15M) and multi-level offtake automation with surface mixers (\$25M) at Pindari Dam. Discussed.

4. Presentations/Consultation

4.1 Regulatory Economics (J Dickson)

- The current WAMC Determination runs to 2020 with functions split between DoIW, NRAR and WaterNSW. An extension to the IPART timetable was requested by DoIW and granted and submissions for both the WAMC and Rural Valleys determinations are now due 30 June 2020.
- WaterNSW has engaged *New Democracy Foundation* to engage with customers. A jury approach will be used to recruit representative water users to work through a detailed engagement where customers have core input into how we can best deliver water and what is a fair way to pay for it. Discussed.
- Members raised concerns that engagement may take place with people who have no idea about water, making decisions for water users. WaterNSW advised that this process will take place *in addition to* the CAGs. It is envisaged that CAG members will still have significant input into pricing discussions.
- WaterNSW noted that any potential member of the jury must be a water user. WaterNSW is currently putting together a reference guide for people who may want to take part.

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4.2 Levels of Service update (L Castro)

- WaterNSW provided an update on the Levels of Service project. Currently in the short-listing phase which will feed into cycle 2 workshop with Border Rivers customers.
- Key LOS priorities and shortlisted options presented and discussed.
- The cycle 2 workshop for the Border Rivers is proposed for 19 November 2019, the day prior to the next CAG meeting, with the purpose to present findings and identify projects customers would like included in the 2020 IPART pricing submission. Customers expressed a preference for the afternoon of 19 November to tie in with CAG travel.

4.3 Local Water Utilities Monitoring Review update (J Dickson)

- WaterNSW had an Operating Licence obligation to review water quality monitoring of water released for local water utilities customers. This review is now complete and a report has been provided to IPART. WaterNSW will communicate findings and initiate follow up discussions with individual LWUs.

4.4 Fixed Fee Rebate update (J Dickson)

- The NSW government recently announced a repeat of the fixed fee rebate of up to \$4000 per licence to the fixed component for general security and some supplementary licences. All rebates will be applied automatically to future invoices from 1 July 2019.
- For more information on drought relief, please visit <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/droughthub/emergency-drought-relief-package>

4.5 Water Reform Implementation Plan (WRIP) (J Dickson)

- WaterNSW provided an update on the Water Reform Implementation Plan (WRIP) timeline, when changes take effect and the staged rollout timetable.
- Metering reform update presented including telemetry and new standards, consultation, field testing rules for duly qualified persons (DQP), inactive works for groundwater and meter title transfer. Reasonable use guidelines and reporting on non-telemetered meters is still to come.
- Members stated that many customers in the Border Rivers will not be compliant by the due date due to not being able to get meters installed and/or verified, availability of pattern approved meters, lack of DQPs and lack of guidelines and requirements. Customers noted it was always going to be an issue with the speed in which the legislation was introduced. Discussed.
- DPI has released a NSW Metering Guidance Tool for customers to ascertain requirements for compliance. It is available at <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/metering-framework>

4.6 Water Insights Portal update (A Langdon)

- As presented at the last meeting, WaterNSW has launched a new Water Insights Portal which is available on our website <https://www.waternsw.com.au/waterinsights/water-insights>
- Additional valleys have now gone live, with remaining sites to be live by end July 2019. WaterNSW is keen to receive customer feedback on what they like, don't like, want to see etc and there is a feedback button on the page.

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4.7 iWAS improvements (J Dickson)

- Carryover forecast by account and a trial of amending water orders within lead times is launching soon. Apportioning usage by licence/works coming later this year.
- Customers requested the ability to add nicknames to their licences in iWAS (eg Boggabilla Weir). WaterNSW advised this is on the list, however requests will be prioritised.

5. Business Papers:

- Noted and taken as read.

6. General Business

6.1 Carp Herpes Virus

- Customers requested an update on the release of the carp herpes virus. WaterNSW advised that DPI Fisheries has done a lot of work investigating this, however, a bigger issue identified is the clean up if the virus is released. There is still a lot of work to be done and potentially could be a couple of years away.

Meeting Review and Close

Next Meeting: Wednesday 20 November 2019 (TBC)

Meeting closed: 1.15pm

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Border Rivers Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 24 July 2019

Carried forward actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
BR1903.01	WaterNSW to look into how operator-initiated changes to pumping patterns is recorded and ensure accurately reflects the delays experienced by customers.	A Langdon	Ongoing.
BR1903.02	WaterNSW to confirm if figures presented on page 18 of the Operations Plan under Prognosis are for general security A and B class combined, or just B class.	A Scott	Complete. The figures are for B class only. To be discussed at meeting.

New actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
BR1907.01	WaterNSW to share the link to the Annual Operations Report with the CAG when available.	A Langdon	

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