

**Macquarie-Cudgegong Customer Advisory Group  
Minutes of Meeting  
Thursday 14 September 2017  
WaterNSW, Blueridge Business Park  
7 Commercial Avenue, Dubbo**

**Present:** Tony Quigley, Paul Keyte, Chris Devitt, Michael Egan, Chris Hogendyk, Kerry Duncan, Peter Schuster, Paul Maisey, Brad Cam, Rob Tuck, Rick Reid, Grant Tranter (Skype), Jonathan Dickson, Andrew Fraser, Sri Sritharan, Mahmood Khan and Toni Hayes (minutes).

Ronan Magarahan attended via Skype for agenda item 8.1.

**Meeting Opened:** 9.30am.

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

– Members welcomed and provided a brief introduction.

**2. Apologies:** Glen Whittaker, Michael Bennett, Lyn Davies, Tim Hosking, Frank McKillop, Bill Tyrwhitt, David Stockler.

**3. Confirmation of Agenda Items & Declaration of Interest(s)**

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

**4. Carried Forward Actions arising from CSC minutes May 2017**

– Actions complete.

– *MC1705.06 – Provide the committee with information on the group procurement process at the next meeting.* WaterNSW advised that there are procedures in place to allow opportunity for smaller contractors and local tenders to submit quotes/tenders.

– Status of closed actions discussed. The committee recommended that the status of actions be listed as incomplete until work has finished. WaterNSW advised that the actions are complete as they have been initiated and addressed. WaterNSW notes customer's concerns however the items will not remain on the action sheet.

**5. CAG Member Introduction/Information**

Presentations by J Dickson (attached)

**5.1 CAG Roles & Responsibilities**

– Roles, responsibilities and scope of CAGs and CAG members going forward presented and discussed.

– WaterNSW will meet with CAGs face to face a minimum of twice per year. Schedule of first round of meetings for 2018 provided.

**5.2 CAG Member Documentation/Claims**

– WaterNSW is moving to electronic methods for documentation and claims. Internet link emailed to all members seeking completion of personal and banking details in July 2017.

– After each CAG meeting members will receive an email requesting feedback, which includes the opportunity to submit a claim for sitting fees and mileage.

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### **6. Elections**

#### **6.1 Election of Chair**

- Nominations for the position of Chair were called. M Egan was nominated by C Hogendyk/T Quigley (carried). No further nominations received.
- M Egan was appointed to the position of Chair unopposed.

#### **6.2 Election of Customer Advisory Group Representative**

- Nominations were called for the position of CAG Representative. M Egan, as elected Chair, accepted the position unopposed. G Tranter nominated as alternate.

### **7. Water Delivery**

#### **7.1 Water System Operations Report**

- M Khan presented the water system operations report, including system operations plan and outages. Reports will be uploaded quarterly to WaterNSW's website and can be found at [www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations](http://www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations).
- Communication of AWDs discussed. DPIW is responsible for publishing AWDs which it does in AWD registers and Water Allocation Statements on its website. WaterNSW publishes a weekly report on its website which includes relevant information for irrigators. Customers can subscribe to these reports and receive notification of updates by calling our Call Centre on 1300 662 077.

### **8. System Operation and Asset Services**

#### **8.1 Asset Maintenance and Services Update**

Presentation by R Magarahan via Skype (attached)

- Asset performance and maintenance in the Macquarie and Cudgegong valleys presented and discussed.
- An update on the Burrendong Temperature Curtain was provided. Reinstatement of the curtain initially planned for October/November, but is at risk. The next step is to repair and reinstate as per the design.
- The thermal curtain concept at Burrendong Dam is an experimental and low cost methodology to address cold water pollution in storages. To date there has not been appropriate conditions to efficiently monitor and test if the curtain is effective, therefore too early to be in a position to replicate elsewhere.
- An update on Gin Gin Weir was provided. Work is planned to put drop boards upstream of the scour pipe at the site. In order to do the work safely, the pool needs to drop 1-2 meters below the weir sill level, which won't happen until end of irrigation season. Delays have occurred in the past due to supplementary events occurring post-season. In the meantime, debris has built up and reduced the flow through the scour pipe. The work will commence as soon as safe conditions present and the pool is low enough.
- An update on rerouting of Bulgeraga Creek Channel was provided. The contractor has provided a quote and WaterNSW is reviewing the internal delivery mechanism. Discussion planned with the landholder in the next 3-4 weeks.

**Action MC1709.01:** *Discussions to occur with landholder regarding rerouting of Bulgeraga Creek Channel.*

*Responsibility: R Magarahan*

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### **9. Presentations/Consultation**

#### **9.1 Regulatory Reform**

Discussed by J Dickson

##### **Water Resource Plans (WRPs)**

- WaterNSW continues to meet with DPI monthly. Significant feedback received from customers indicating the WRP process has been slow and inadequate. WaterNSW has relayed this to DPI and continues to follow up and pursue monthly.
- SAP process and timeline is outlined on the DPI website. Customers noted that the SAP framework is now in line with the WRP process however the timeframe is still a concern.
- WaterNSW's submission on the status and issues paper is available on our website. The DPI process hasn't made submissions public however in some valleys customers have agreed to share submissions with each other.

##### **Investigation of Allegations of Illegal Pumping Activity**

- As a result of the recent Four Corners program five independent enquiries have been identified (none of which are directed at WaterNSW). As WaterNSW has carriage of former-DPI compliance functions, we are providing assistance as required to the Ken Matthews enquiry.
- A preliminary report on the Ken Matthews enquiry has been released, with follow up report due November. WaterNSW has provided a media release which is available on our website.
- Customers questioned if the Macquarie is underspent on compliance. WaterNSW does not believe the valley is underspent, with a number of vacancies yet to be filled. WaterNSW has inherited a backlog of compliance issues which we are working to address.
- MRFF has indicated that it will be replying to a number of issues arising from the Matthews report and sought support from WaterNSW in the form of information on some of the outcomes of the report. WaterNSW advised it is providing assistance as required to the enquiry however is not publicly responding at this point.
- WaterNSW stresses that no convictions or prosecutions have been made, only allegations at this point.

#### **9.2 Voice of Customer Framework**

Presentation by J Dickson (attached)

- WaterNSW is launching its Online Community in October which is a connection to a digital network of WaterNSW customers. CAG members will be automatically registered to this information sharing and gathering network and will receive an email confirmation once the platform is live.
- A registration link was emailed to CAG members to share with their constituents so that the Online Community can grow and provide benefit to our customers.
- A communications preferences survey will be sent to registered customers so WaterNSW can understand the type of information customers want and to ensure the platform fits your needs.
- WaterNSW uses Twitter as one of our communication platforms to keep customers informed, and encourages customers to follow WaterNSW.

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### **9.3 Customer Communications**

#### **Customer Service Charter**

- WaterNSW is revising its Customer Service Charter to reflect additional responsibilities taken over from the Regulator, including customer contact; licensing, regulation and dealings; water delivery, ordering and reporting; and information and communication.
- Overview of end-of-call survey results provided (July 2017).

#### **CIMS/WaterNSW Phone System Update**

- WaterNSW is upgrading its telephony platform to enable customers to make contact through multiple avenues (eg phone, IM, SMS etc). Currently assessing options, with expected implementation early 2018.

### **9.4 Levels of Service (LOS)**

Presentation by A Fraser (attached)

- As discussed at past CSC meetings, WaterNSW is undertaking a LOS project in order to develop customer supported long-term infrastructure plans. The project will be implemented over the next two years.
- 20-Year Infrastructure Strategy discussed. WaterNSW will only invest in assets that customers see value in. Currently looking at establishing a baseline of existing performance.
- Presented and discussed issues identified that affect customer LOS in the Macquarie and Cudgegong valleys and options identified to address key issues. WaterNSW will explore the issues and options with customers and investigate in more detail over the next 12 months.
- Consultation steps and timeline presented and discussed.
- Feedback sought from customers on how they wish to engage with WaterNSW on LOS during the period of consultation. Customer preference is for face-to-face consultation and should include a broad range of stakeholders (in addition to CAG members). If can be tied in with other meetings/workshops would be beneficial.
- WaterNSW encourages customers to think about the major long-term issues facing their valley and associated LOS needs.
- Customers questioned if groundwater LOS will be included. WaterNSW is currently looking at ways to address groundwater in the project.

### **9.5 Macquarie Priority Catchment Water Security Project**

Presentation by A Fraser (attached)

- The Macquarie valley has been identified as a priority catchment in the 2014 State Infrastructure Strategy Report. WaterNSW has been successful in getting funding to run a formal process to develop a study in the valley.
- The project intends to define water security issues and investigate technical and economic feasibility of non-build and asset options and will be run in parallel to the LOS project.
- Customers provided positive comments on the LOS and Water Security projects.

### **9.6 Commonwealth Funded Asset Programs**

Discussed by A Fraser

- National Water Infrastructure Development Fund applications currently open.
- WaterNSW is currently preparing three submissions for capital funding, predominantly in the Border Rivers, Peel and Lachlan valleys. If any future funding opportunities are made available, customers will be kept informed.

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### **9.7 Local Water Utility (LWU) Monitoring Review**

Presentation by J Dickson (attached)

- The LWU Monitoring Review is a new WaterNSW Operating Licence obligation, instigated by NSW Health, due by December 2018.
- The focus of the initiative is to explore what role WaterNSW can play in terms of mitigating risk to LWUs for town drinking water supply.
- Currently developing the project plan which will be shared with LWUs and the CAGs over the coming 18 months.
- Customers questioned if the review only relates to surface water and questioned if water quality changes in relation to aquifers.

**Action MC1709.02:** Clarify whether the LWU Monitoring Review covers all types of water or only surface water.

*Responsibility: G Begg*

### **10. Reports**

Noted and taken as read.

- North Macquarie Marsh desilt and tree clearing (2913) discussed. WaterNSW advised that this project is on hold until the piping issue has been dealt with. DPIW was close to signing an agreement.

**Action MC1709.03:** Request an update from DPI Water on the North Macquarie Bypass Channel – where is the project up to and when is a decision expected?

*Responsibility: S Sritharan*

### **11. General Business**

#### **11.1 Amendments to Water Orders within Lead Time**

- Customers were advised that **all** amendments to water orders within lead times should be made by calling the WaterNSW Call Centre on 1300 662 077. Enquiries will be diverted to the duty officer and customers will receive notification via email if the change can be made.

#### **11.2 Automation of Marebone Fishladder**

- OEH noted that the new bypass gates adjacent to the fishladder at Marebone Weir is not automated and sought support from WaterNSW to fast track the automation to maximise efficiency. Noted that *Environmental Planning and Protection* is underspent in the OPEX report and questioned if the leftover money is available to be used to automate the new bypass gates which provide attraction flow. WaterNSW advised that automation of the gates has been scheduled however is delayed due to the fishway program being on hold.

**Action MC1709.04:** WaterNSW to investigate if automation of the new bypass gates at Marebone Weir could be made a higher priority in the CAPEX program for 2017-18.

*Responsibility: S Sritharan*

- Discussed recent environmental water release undertaken by OEH to provide fish connection flows from the Macquarie to the Barwon. It was noted that water was being pumped by some customers in the unregulated Macquarie system when the licence condition states that during releases from Burrendong Dam water must not be taken. WaterNSW noted that in order to enforce suspension of extraction, very specific conditions must be attached to those licences. OEH advised there was a gentleman's agreement in place with landholders not to pump, however some did not keep the agreement.
- Licensing and Regulation and specific licence conditions discussed.

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**Action MC1709.05:** Obtain information from Water Regulation and Licensing on processes for amending conditions on unregulated licences to enforce suspension on extractions during environmental water deliveries.

*Responsibility: S Sritharan*

### **11.3 Real Time Water Site**

- Customers noted that the real time data for groundwater monitoring station 30204 for “this year” is not working correctly, just flat-lining.

**Action MC1709.06:** Ensure real time data for groundwater monitoring station 30204 is working correctly and available on the website.

*Responsibility: S Sritharan*

### **11.4 Commonwealth Investment Framework Discussion Paper**

- The Commonwealth Environmental Water Office has recently added the Commonwealth Investment Framework discussion paper to its website. Customers are encouraged to provide feedback on the paper and website. See [www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo](http://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo).

## **12. Meeting Review and Close**

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday 14 March 2018

**Meeting closed:** 1.30pm

**Macquarie-Cudgegong Customer Advisory Group - Actions – 14 September 2017**

| <b>CURRENT ACTIONS</b> |   |                       |  |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Action No.</b>      | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Responsibility</b> | <b>Status</b>  |
| <b>MC1709.01</b>       | Discussions to occur with landholder regarding rerouting of Bulgeraga Creek Channel.  | R Magarahan           |  |
| <b>MC1709.02</b>       | Clarify whether the LWU Monitoring Review covers all types of water or only surface water.  | G Begg                | <b>COMPLETE.</b><br>The scope of the review is surface water only. |
| <b>MC1709.03</b>       | Request an update from DPI Water on the North Macquarie Bypass Channel – where is the project up to and when is a decision expected?  | S Sritharan           |  |
| <b>MC1709.04</b>       | WaterNSW to investigate if automation of the new bypass gates at Marebone Weir could be made a higher priority in the CAPEX program for 2017-18.  | S Sritharan           |  |
| <b>MC1709.05</b>       | Obtain information from Water Regulation and Licensing on processes for amending conditions on unregulated licences to enforce suspension on extractions during environmental water deliveries. | S Sritharan           |  |
| <b>MC1709.06</b>       | Ensure real time data for groundwater monitoring station 30204 is working correctly and available on the website.   | S Sritharan           |  |