

Macquarie-Cudgegong Customer Advisory Group - Minutes of Meeting



Location: WaterNSW, Blueridge Business Park, DUBBO

Date: 3 July 2019

Time: 9.30am

Present: Glen Whittaker, Rick Reid, Chris Hogendyk, Michael Bennett, Lyn Davies, Stewart Crawford, Jason Wilson, Garry Hemsworth, Simon Earl, Michael Sutherland, Robert Millner, Rob Tuck, Grant Tranter, Stephen Chesworth, Frank McKillop (observer), David Stockler, Jonathan Dickson, Dan Berry, Sri Sritharan, Mahmood Khan, Ronan Magaharan, Emma Oates and Toni Hayes (minutes).

B Mayhew and R Walker attended for agenda item 3.1.

M Clayton and N Chowdhury (Skype) attended for agenda item 3.2.

H Hadungoda and A Fraser attended via Skype for agenda item 4.2.

Meeting Opened: 9.30am.

1. Introduction:

1.1 Welcome and introductions

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

1.2 Apologies

- Tony Quigley, Tim Hosking, Peter Schuster, Paul Keyte, Lindsay White.

1.3 Confirmation of Agenda Items

- Customers would like to see groundwater discussions added to future agendas.
- Customers sought information on results from environmental flows to the Macquarie Marshes. Referred to DPIE for update out of session.
- Customers requested an update on proposed rerouting of Bulgeraga Channel to mitigate delivery constraints (refer to agenda item 3.2).

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

- L Davies was nominated by G Tranter and appointed to the position unopposed. No other nominations received. L Davies was also appointed CAG Representative.

1.7 Minutes of Previous Meeting, 26 February 2019:

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on 26 February 2019 be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.

M Bennett/R Reid

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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 and Cudgegong valleys including dam storage, water availability, inflows and storage forecast, outage planning and drought operation measures. The plan is publicly available on WaterNSW's website at www.watersw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations.
- First phase of the Bulk Water Transfer (BWT) from Windamere to Burrendong Dam occurred 1-25 January 2019. A second phase is planned for December 2019 should dry conditions persist. Information is available in WaterNSW's weekly water availability report published on our website. WaterNSW also noted that the BWT this year will be quite different to what has happened in the past. At this stage planning to release at lower rates to maintain flow through Burrendong and likely to go on for a longer period.
- Customers expressed concerns about the volume of water that went down Gunningbar Creek, noting it has flooded twice and other systems got no water. WaterNSW advised that the total volume was under 10GL with any surplus used to try to get S&D replenishment done. Water was delivered at the maximum possible rate through the Gunningbar system. During the drought, if there is rain/surplus water, WaterNSW will make decisions as to how best share the resource based on conditions.
- Drought operations discussed. Drought account water will be reactivated at 261GL, however would require ~90GL of inflows in July (will change monthly without inflows).

Drought Operation Measures

- Public information sessions were held in January with local communities and councils in Warren, Narromine, Dubbo and Mudgee.
- The combination of current storage volumes and a continuation of zero inflows will mean there isn't enough water to maintain river flows to the whole valley for all of 2019/20. If these zero inflows continue then the priority will be to extend supply for towns and critical industries.
- WaterNSW has formed a River Operations Stakeholder Consultation Committee (ROSCCo), with the first meeting held in May at Narromine. A copy of the ROSCco presentation can be found at <https://www.watersw.com.au/supply/regional-nsw/roscco>

2.2 Operational Drought Update (D Berry)

- 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.
- Further information on the drought is available on WaterNSW's website at www.watersw.com.au/supply/drought-information

3. Assets:

3.1 Asset Maintenance and Services Update (B Mayhew)

- Asset performance and maintenance in the Macquarie and Cudgegong valleys presented and discussed, including safety improvements, maintenance delivery and upcoming works of note.

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3.2 Annual Capital Plan (M Clayton)

- WaterNSW has committed to providing customers with visibility of Annual Capital Plans for feedback prior to WaterNSW Board approval.
- Macquarie valley forecast, completed and in progress projects and new candidate projects presented and discussed.
- FY22-25 IPART Pricing Submission – WaterNSW will have a draft capital program to present to customers in November with final to be presented in March 2020. Submission due 30 June 2020.
- Renewals will be prioritised on a risk-based approach by assessing customer needs, asset condition and asset criticality. Other major works will comprise of three dam Safety Upgrade (DSU) Fish Passage Offsets. Macquarie re-regulating storage project will be completed in the next regulatory period.

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).
- WaterNSW Fish Passage Optimisation Project update presented. Dam Safety Upgrade Projects have existing s218 obligations to construct a fishway with proposed sites at Gin Gin Weir, Gunningbar Offtake and Marebone Break. Fishway costs will be included in the IPART FY22-25 pricing submission
- Northern Basin Environmental Works and Measures Projects update provided. WaterNSW is seeking to get prefeasibility funding to look into potential CWP solutions/options.
- Customers queried whether WaterNSW has an idea of operating expenses during the feasibility study. WaterNSW advised there wouldn't be much operating cost associated as works are capital funded. If we can get funding to progress options, we will have a better understanding.
- Capacity constraints at Bulgeraga Creek: there has been no progress since the last site visit. WaterNSW will come up with a plan to fit the work in with our capital plan and prioritisation of works will happen. Will update the CAG on progress at the November meeting.

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. Customers stated that recruitment is critical to this working.
- It is envisaged that CAG members will still have significant input into pricing discussions.

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4.2 Levels of Service update (H Hadungoda/A Fraser)

- WaterNSW provided an update on the Levels of Service project. Currently in the short-listing phase which will feed into cycle 2 workshop with Macquarie-Cudgegong customers.
- Key LOS priorities and shortlisted options presented and discussed.
- The cycle 2 workshop for the Macquarie is scheduled for 30 October 2019, immediately after the next CAG meeting, with the purpose to present findings and identify projects customers would like included in the 2020 IPART pricing submission.

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 (E Oates)

- 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.
- DPI has released a NSW Metering Guidance Tool for customers to ascertain requirements for compliance. The tool, as well as additional information on the metering framework, is available at <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/metering-framework>
- Customers commented that the 91i forms are difficult to find on WaterNSW's website if you don't know what they are called to do a search. Feedback noted.

4.6 Water Insights Portal update (J Dickson)

- As presented at the last meeting, WaterNSW has launched a new Water Insights Portal which is available on our website <https://www.watnsw.com.au/waterinsights/water-insights>
- Additional valleys have now gone live, including the Macquarie. 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.
- Customers would like to ensure groundwater information is included.

5. Business Papers:

- Noted and taken as read.

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6. General Business

6.1 iWAS improvements

- 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.
- **Meeting Review and Close**

Next Meeting : Wednesday 30 October 2019 (TBC)

Meeting closed: 1.15pm

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Macquarie-Cudgegong Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 3 July 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)	Long-term project, ongoing.
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)	Long-term project, ongoing.
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><i>Current update: conditions remain unchanged with access to weir crest not possible due to water levels. Works are planned to commence when levels drop to an acceptable height that will allow safe access.</i></p> <p><i>It is not envisaged there is any negative impact to customers from the uncontrolled scour pipe whilst ever the water level is over crest height.</i></p>

New actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
	Nil new actions arising.		

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