

Macquarie ROSSCo

River Operations Stakeholder Consultation Committee

– Notes of Meeting



Location: Narromine United Services Club
Mitchell Highway, Narromine

Date: 17 September 2019

Time: 10.00am

Present: Alayna Gleeson, Andrew Lavelle, Brian Robertson, Chris Devitt, Craig Davies, Craig Singleton, Dan Berry, Daniel Scherrer, Dave Motely, David Swan, Eric Poga, Garry Hall, Glen Reinke, Glenn Wilcox, Huw Rabone, Kym Miller, Jamie Barrow, Kathleen Oke, Lindsay White, Mahmudul Haque, Matt Parmeter, Michael Egan, Michael Wrathall, Richard Woodlock, Rick Reid, Robert Fletcher, Sam Davis, Simon Pradhan, Sir Sritharan, Steve Hinks, Tony Quigley, Paul Keyte, Tracey Schultz (Minutes).

Apologies: Jonathon Thompson, Matt Hanson, Grant Tranter, Mike Bennett, Rodney Price, Graeme Bourke, Tracey Barton

Meeting opened: 10.10am

1. Drought Status & Operations in 2019-20

Sri Sritharan (WaterNSW) gave a presentation to the meeting on the Drought Status & Operations in 2019-20:

- 2.1 Since Last ROSSCo Meeting
- 2.2 Drought Situation Update
- 2.2 Drought Outlook
- 2.3 What are we doing now
- 2.4 What are the priorities for downstream tributary flows
- 2.5 Initiatives and support
- 2.6 Keep informed
- 2.7 Potential rules of engagement.

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at waternsw.com.au

Follow us on Twitter [@WaterNSW](https://twitter.com/WaterNSW)

waternsw.com.au

2. Discussion by Stakeholders & Recommendations

- WaterNSW Media (Tony Webber) provided clarification on the recent media information published in the Daily Telegraph. The information provided to the publication was factual information on the worst-case scenarios and was not inclusive of the works that WaterNSW have done to maximise the timings of the day zero scenarios. WaterNSW does not have any control as to how the information provided is interpreted. There was a lot of interest generated due to the publication, particularly with the local councils around the area, and clarification around the actual numbers was discussed.
- The works for the Burrendong deep storage is on track and is currently out for tender.
- As the drought worsens, factual information/communication is crucial to get the correct message through to disperse the untruths.
- It was noted that the Minister has stated that she wants to stand by the communities to make the most of every drop of water.
- Sri Sritharan talked through the Extreme Events Policy with Macquarie currently sitting on stage 4. It was noted that Cudgegong is currently on stage 2.
- Participants discussed the request to trade stock/domestic water to Warren Golf Club to keep the club running. There is a need to work with the department to see if this would be possible. It may be possible for a special permission to be granted. **Action : WaterNSW to recommend trading (assignment of allocation) of allocations from a S&D licence to another S&D licence as well as trading of allocations from S&D licence to another access licence to maintain community assets. Recommendations to be forwarded to DPIE Water and CWTAG.**
- Lidar and Bathymetric studies have been undertaken and preliminary results indicate a decrease in the amount of water that is available in the Burrendong Dam versus previously stated. WaterNSW is waiting on the final report and once this is to hand a decision will be made as to whether an additional survey is required to confirm the figures. Until the studies are confirmed, these new figures are being used in the calculations of the water currently available in the dams.
- The cease to flow timing is around May 2020. The mining companies are scheduling for March 2020. Confirmation of these dates is critical to ensure local companies have enough time to prepare. All communities need to take action to reduce usage. **Action Sri Sritharan – Confirm actual dates for cease to flow.**

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at waternsw.com.au

Follow us on Twitter [@WaterNSW](https://twitter.com/WaterNSW)

waternsw.com.au

- Discussion around bore holes; how can these help to draw out the timing for the cease to flow and will the Dubbo bores have any impact on local communities' water (Narromine).
- WaterNSW is working with Warren Council to work out the best height for the water at Warren Weir.
- Andrew Lavelle presented the Burrendong Deep Water Pumping station project. The presentation information can be found [here](#).
- Priority for water users needs to be documented including who has first priority – mines, zoo, abattoirs etc. Decisions need to be made in consultation with committee and agency counterparts.
- Bore water holes are dropping significantly, possibly due to tree usage, evaporation, weather conditions etc.
- Fisheries provided a presentation on past, current and future activities, the presentation can be found [here](#).
- Questions around the carp virus - should this be proceeding now considering the rivers are so low. It was noted that it is a Federal issue not state, therefore out of the states control.
- Western Plains zoo stated that the high security allowance is around 500ML/year and they have reduced the demand to approximately to 300ML/year. The reduction has been seen in irrigation of public areas with minor impact on visitors. The zoo is focussing on animal welfare. Capital works for circulation of water through the zoo is being undertaken, reviewing of water usage across the site. Irrigation is currently at 50%. Focussing parts of their water usage on pasture for the animals. Currently looking at recycling, reuse etc. It was also noted that 80% of the Dubbo region for tourism is the visiting of the zoo.
- Fletchers advised that since the last meeting, they have reduced their water usage for the business by about 25% and are looking at ways to reduce further.
- Cobar Council stated that the community have responded very well to the restrictions Council have put in place and have seen a reduction of around 30% reduction in the previous usage.
- Dubbo Council currently use 70% surface water and 30% ground water. They are currently on level 2 water restrictions and are planning to move to level 3 in the coming weeks. Possibility of being at level 5 early next year. Looking to provide the zoo with effluent re-use of around 3,000ML/month, also looking at recharge systems. Council rangers are enforcing

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at waternsw.com.au

Follow us on Twitter [@WaterNSW](https://twitter.com/WaterNSW)

waternsw.com.au

non-compliant water users. Wellington are far worse off than Dubbo with no groundwater for their use.

- Tony Quigley advised that they were using around 3,000ML, have now brought it down to 300ML, but may need 50 – 100ML of trade water. Gin Gin weir pipe is still maintaining head, with a trickle still being seen over the weir.
- Endeavour Mining have reduced their water use in August by 155ML. September saw extensive drilling exploration and have also cut back 10% further. For the coming year, 3 scenarios have been put to the owners, December is the cut off for knowing what is going to be available for the coming water year.
- Upstream of Warren, 4 – 6 months of supply. Most landowners have destocked. The priority for tributary flows, if possible, be allocated to Warren. WaterNSW publicity around the suspension to flow rules for the Marshes could have been better. Last water delivery was December last year. Need to work together to get the real facts out.
- Also concerns about the lower weir level at Warren and firefighting ability. Currently on Level 3 restrictions. Upstream users of Warren need to be very conservative now. The Government needs to step up and put water restrictions in place. Groundwater is starting to go saline. Currently looking into desalination of the groundwater. The lower weir is leaking.
- Fisheries advised to inform NSW Fisheries of any concerns regarding fish deaths or any information concerning fish on 1800 043 436.
- Rick Reid noted that it has been 12 months since any top up. Tributary flows need to be decided via consultation.
- Richard Woodlock advised that below Warren, water was cut off on 6th September. The river is already drying up as well as Duck and Crooked creeks. Gunningbar is still flowing. Duck creek had a number of water birds and pelicans, darters and other native birds, seeming to be in a reach that has recently been dried up. They were looking for a site to land. Very sad, first time he has seen this. Richard also thanked WaterNSW for keeping the river running, the zoo and Fletchers for cutting their water usage. The odds and evens system was suggested to reduce the town water usage by 50%.
- Michael Egan advised of destocking along the river system. Domestic water and fish habitat remaining. He was surprised how quickly the water holes are diminishing. He thought it would last 6 – 8 weeks, but now realising it will only be a few weeks before

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at waternsw.com.au

Follow us on Twitter [@WaterNSW](https://twitter.com/WaterNSW)

waternsw.com.au

pumping/carting will be required. He enquired about the bore holes but there is a large backlog of applications at the moment. The bores haven't been used for many years and now they are needed. Below Marybone will run out of water first, probably early October and Bulgeraga have no water holes in the river. If any tributary flows come through, priority needs to be agreed.

- Tritton Mines -End of November for allowed water. No-one is selling high security. Losses along the Gunningbar so could be turned off soon. Alternatives are being looked at. If Tritton Mines were to cut water use, they would also have to cut production. They are setting up for water optimisation. There is not an opportunity to do a half closedown, it either all or none. Employees are very unsure of the future. Tritton Mines employs around 350 locals directly and approximately 70 contractors. It was noted that they had 5 years of reserve. There is plenty of ore around but not economical to mine at the moment.

4.6 The presentation will be forwarded with the minutes and can be accessed at [Presentation.](#)

Andrew Lavelle, Lead Project Manager from WaterNSW presented the Macquarie River Re-regulated Storage detailed business case and discussion was held around the same.

Meeting Review and Close

Next meeting: 17 December 2019

Meeting Closed at 2.00pm

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at waternsw.com.au

Follow us on Twitter [@WaterNSW](https://twitter.com/WaterNSW)

waternsw.com.au

New actions

Action number	Action	Resp.	Status
2.1	Cease to flow dates required	Sri Sritharan	
2.2	WaterNSW to recommend trading (assignment of allocation) of allocations from a S&D licence to another S&D licence as well as trading of allocations from S&D licence to another access licence to maintain community assets. Recommendations to be forwarded to DPIE Water and CWTAG	Sri Sritharan	

Carried forward actions

Action number	Action	Resp.	Status
1.2	Teleconference to be organised to discuss distribution of inflows	Tracey Schultz	Teleconference will occur when inflows occur – ongoing

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**
 Visit us at waternsw.com.au
 Follow us on Twitter [@WaterNSW](https://twitter.com/WaterNSW)

Please drive safely and remember the importance of taking a 15-minute break every two hours.

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**
Visit us at waterNSW.com.au
Follow us on Twitter [@WaterNSW](https://twitter.com/WaterNSW)