

**Murrumbidgee  
Customer Advisory Group  
Minutes of Meeting  
Monday 21 August 2017  
Quest, Railway Street, Griffith**

**Present:** Peter Sheppard, David Heffer (observer), Tanya Thompson, Rene Woods, Brendan Barry, Debbie Buller, Richard Stott, James Maguire, Scott Hogan, Helen Dalton, Paul Maytom, Ian Lugsdin, David Stockler, Jonathan Dickson, Vincent Kelly, Andrew Fraser, Sonia Townsend (minutes).

**Meeting Opened:** 10.05am.

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- Members welcomed and provided a brief introduction.

**2. Apologies:** Nick Maynard, Karen Hutchinson, Iva Quarisa, Hilton Taylor.

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

- Declarations of interest were sought from CAG members 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 June 2017**

- See attached action sheet.

**5. CAG Member Introduction/Information**

**5.1 CAG Roles & Responsibilities**

- Presentation by J Dickson (copy attached).
- Copy of WaterNSW brochure "NSW's bulk water supplier, river operator and your one stop shop for licensing, water trades and water information" provided to members.
- WNSW will meet face to face with CAGs a minimum of six monthly. Schedule of first round of meetings for 2018 provided.

**Action MBG1708.01:** *Confirm whether Murrumbidgee CAG representation was to include Snowy catchment.*

*Responsibility: S Townsend*

**5.2 CAG Member Documentation/Claims**

- WNSW now adopting more efficient ways to collect data. Link sent to all members seeking completion of personal and banking details in July 2017.
- After each meeting members will receive email requesting feedback, and an opportunity to submit a claim.
- Customers suggested WNSW provide multiple copies of newsletters/brochures to irrigation corporations to allow for distribution to each member internally.

**Action MBG1708.02:** *Copy of link to WaterNSW Online Community to be provided to all CAG members for distribution to their constituents.*

*Responsibility: S Townsend*

**6. Elections**

## ***Murrumbidgee Customer Advisory Group***

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### **5.1 Election of Chair**

- Chair to be appointed for a two year period.
  
- Nominations for the position of Chair were called, with Brendan Barry nominated by P Sheppard/R Stott.
  
- Scott Hogan declined a nomination from H Dalton.
  
- As no further nominations were received, Brendan Barry was appointed to the position of Chair.

### **5.2 Election of CAG Advisory Group Representative**

- Nominations were called for the position of CAG Representative
  
- Brendan Barry was nominated by P Sheppard/S Hogan and appointed to the position of CAG Representative.

## **7. Water Delivery**

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

- V Kelly presented the Water System Operations report – copy of website link emailed to members prior to the meeting. Report can be found at <http://www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations>
  
- Discussion on:
  - Operational surplus.
  - Finley Escape: Currently no agreement with Murray Irrigation Ltd (MIL) in place for use of the Finley Escape - WNSW/MIL negotiations ongoing. WNSW recognise the importance of considering the break-even cost relating to benefit of delivery flexibility vs cost to customers for use of the infrastructure.
  
- BoM forecast for median rainfall (provided in Water Operations report) has been updated since release of the information used in the report.

#### **Linked/Tagged Licences – Identification of Issues**

- To be addressed in General Business.

#### **Outcomes of Supply Shortfall Meeting**

- Shortfall incident occurred 5-10 January 2017 (5-7 January Gogeldrie Weir pool level insufficient to meet Sturt Canal demand).
  
- Internal incident review February 2017, followed by a meeting with Murrumbidgee Irrigation (MI) and Coleambally Irrigation Co-op Ltd (CICL) in March, and a further follow-up meeting in August.
  
- Issues identified included communication, inaccurate river flow and height data, resourcing issues, current design of storage, transmission and delivery infrastructure.
  
- Six actions for improvement now identified:
  - Review of system configuration
  - Clearly define levels of service
  - Review of maintenance delivery plan and process for gauging network
  - Formalisation of communication processes
  - Review of forecasting processes

## **Murrumbidgee Customer Advisory Group**

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- Formalisation of an operational working group to focus on improved seasonal operational planning.
- Customers suggested WNSW investigate shortfall impact on grower yields, which would be valuable if a case was being made in the future to undertake works to secure supply in the valley.

Customers noted the following:

- A shared understanding of what is expected in a particular season is needed – better communication.
- Customers see benefit in WNSW planning with them each season with regard to both water delivery and scheduled maintenance activities.
- Concerns that BoM forecasting is not always accurate, and is being used as a tool for water use forecasting.
- Concerns that staffing numbers may have been insufficient over the period.
- Customers agreed communication is key during critical supply periods.

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

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

- R Magaharan provided the Asset Maintenance and Services Update by Skype (copy attached).
- Customers questioned reason for no “Determination to Date” values being included in the Capital Expenditure Report for several Murrumbidgee items (e.g. Burrinjuck Dam cableway upgrade).

**Action MBG1708.03:** Reason for no “Determination to Date” values being included in Capex Report for several items, resulting in 100% variance (e.g. 4310 BJ Cableway Update).

*Responsibility: S Townsend*

**Action MBG1708.04:** Future Asset Services and Maintenance Updates to include future planned maintenance activities for the valley.

*Responsibility: R Magaharan*

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

#### **9.1 Regulatory Reform**

Presentation by D Stockler

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

- DPI Water own the WRP process, with WNSW as a stakeholders (alongside customers) in that process. WNSW provided their own submission to DPI on the WRPs.
- At several previous Customer Service Committee meetings, customers agreed to share their submissions with other valley customers.
- WNSW advised DPI confirmed that Pre-requisite Policy Measures will be discussed as part of the WRP process.
- Timeline of key dates for the WRP process is available on the DPI website.
- Customers concerned that what has been published on the DPI website does not accurately reflect the consultation which has occurred during the WRP process (relating to meeting venues, consultation and provision of documentation).

## **Murrumbidgee Customer Advisory Group**

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**Action MBG1708.05:** *Customer concerns that what has been published on the DPI website with regard to the WRP process consultation does not accurately reflect what has occurred during the process (relating to inaccurate details on meeting venues, consultation and provision of documentation). D Stockler to convey customer concerns to DPI in the regular monthly WNSW/DPI forum.*

*Responsibility: D Stockler*

- Customers reiterated previous frustrations with the process.

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

- As a result of the recent Four Corners program, four independent enquiries have been identified to date, with one currently active (none of which are directed at WNSW). WNSW providing assistance as required to the Ken Matthews enquiry (as WNSW now have carriage of former-DPI compliance functions).
- WNSW stress that no convictions or prosecutions have been made, with only allegations at this point.
- Next Thursday 31 August a preliminary report on the Ken Matthews Enquiry is due, with follow up report due November.

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

- J Dickson provided update (copy attached)
- WNSW uses Twitter as one of our communication platforms to keep customers informed, and encourage customers to follow WNSW.
- WNSW launching their online community – connection to a digital network of WNSW customers. CAG members invited to join this information sharing and gathering network, and will be automatically registered upon completion of post-meeting survey.
- Customers noted a large portion of customers do not have good mobile service in rural areas, and a large number do not use Twitter. Customers very supportive of better communication via the WNSW website.
- As one example of the survey data collected, an overview of end-of-call survey results was shared (July 2017).

### **9.3 Customer Communications**

#### **Customer Service Charter**

- Revised Customer Charter to reflect the additional responsibilities WNSW has taken over from the Regulator
  - Customer Contact
  - Licencing Regulation and Dealings
  - Water Delivery, Ordering and reporting
  - Information and Communication

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

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

## ***Murrumbidgee Customer Advisory Group***

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### **9.4 Snowy Licence Review**

- Ben Lathwell joined the meeting by Skype to provide the Snowy License Review (copy attached).
- DPI Water has commenced the 10 yearly review of the Snowy Water License. Submissions due 28 August 2017.
- As system operator, WNSW believe it important to consider if opportunity exists to improve the licence:
  - Water security outcomes (with neutral or beneficial impact) on energy security in particular relaxation arrangements
  - Flood mitigation for Tumut and Murrumbidgee Rivers
- WNSW interested in understanding our customers' views in making a submission.
- Customers requested time to consider prior to making any response, and requested something to take back to their constituents for review/feedback.

**Action MBG1708.06:** *Additional information on the Snowy Licence Review to be provided to CAG members, with responses to be forwarded to Sonia as soon as possible (prior to 28 August deadline).*

*Responsible: B Lathwell*

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

Presentation by A Fraser (copy attached).

- WNSW undertaking the LOS project over the coming 21 months to develop customer supported long-term infrastructure plans.
- Outline of some of the issues identified which affect customer LOS presented.
- Current stage of consultation process: existing LOS quantified per valley. Early 2018 customer consultations on long term issues and desired levels of service will commence. March 2019 customer-focussed long term strategy.
- Feedback sought from customers on how they wish to engage with WNSW on LOS during the period of consultation.
- OEHL suggested a meeting with OEHL and CEWH could be held to cover multiple valleys in one consultation.
- Customers agreed that face to face consultation in Murrumbidgee is desired, noting that the Murrumbidgee is very diverse, and some customers will have different priorities - therefore several locations for consultation may be required.
- WNSW encourage customers to think about the major long term issues facing their valley, and their associated LOS needs.

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

Presentation by A Fraser.

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

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

G Begg joined the meeting by Skype to provide the LWU Review (copy attached).

- LWU review is a WNSW Operating Licence obligation, due by December 2018.

## **Murrumbidgee Customer Advisory Group**

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- Currently developing project plan which will be shared with LWUs and the CAGs over the coming 18 months.
- WNSW keen for members to be informed regarding investigations regarding increased monitoring. No specific action required at this point from the CAG, however the group will be kept informed and provided with a draft report in 2018.
- Customers requested more specifics on the review prior to the next meeting.

**Action MBG1708.07:** *More detail of the Local Water Utility (LWU) Review to be provided to CAG members prior to the March 2018 meeting.*

*Responsibility: G Begg*

### **9. Reports**

- Noted and taken as read.
  - Operating Statements
  - Capital Expenditure Statements
  - Key Projects Updates

### **10. General Business**

#### **10.1 Quantifying Losses**

- Discussion on variances in losses in previous years in Murrumbidgee system, and an opportunity to quantify where some of those quantities go, measure the volumes and better manage losses within the valley. Customers agree 100GL is very meaningful to the valley and sought advice on what they can do to assist WNSW to investigate further.
- WNSW acknowledge that a reduction in transmission losses provides greater value to customers, and are aware of the need for greater attention on the issue.
- Customers agreed they are keen to see the issue reviewed.

**Action MBG1708.08:** *WNSW to provide information on the current Murrumbidgee Valley loss assessment for review, including identification of contributing factors (which factors are measureable/aren't measurable) with a view to quantifying losses in the Murrumbidgee system. To be included as agenda item March 2018.*

*Responsibility: V Kelly*

#### **10.2 Linked/Tagged Licences**

- Brief recap of information previously presented at the June 2017 CSC meeting on linked/tagged licences provided.

**Action MBG1708.09:** *Condensed version (fact sheet) of the key issues associated with linked/tagged licences to be uploaded to the WaterNSW internet for the information of all customers.*

*Responsibility: V Kelly*

- Customers concerned linked licences may advantageously support a small number of customers, and that when rules were put in place, large market trade was not foreseen. Added concern that the volume traded on these licences has increased significantly in the past two years.
- Customers questioned whether anything can be done about the rules in place - if not, no further action or discussion is warranted.

**Action 1708.10:** *WNSW to provide answers to the following re linked/tagged licences, for further discussion/review at the March 2018 meeting:*

### **Murrumbidgee Customer Advisory Group**

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- *What was initial intent of the linked/tagged rules?*
- *Are there any unintended consequences of these rules?*
- *Are the tagged/linked licences being utilised in the manner originally intended? (And if not, are there any advantages to a small number of account holders)?*
- *If these licence holders receive an advantage, is this deemed to be unfair advantage? (And if so, should action be taken, and what action would that be)?*
- *If proven that linked licences are providing licence holders with an unfair advantage, is there any opportunity for customers to pursue a possible change to these licences?*

*Responsibility: V Kelly*

### **11. Meeting Review and Close**

**Meeting closed:** 3.00pm

**Murrumbidgee Customer Advisory Group - Actions – 21 August 2017**

<b>CURRENT ACTIONS</b>			
<b>Action No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>MBG1708.01</b>	Confirm whether Murrumbidgee CAG representation was to include Snowy catchment.	S Townsend	Snowy listed as one of the catchments included in the Murrumbidgee Valley for potential representation on the Murrumbidgee CAG. No stipulation that each CAG must have representation from each catchment – listed as a guide only. Representation determined by applicants.
<b>MBG1708.02</b>	Copy of link to WaterNSW Online Community to be provided to all CAG members for distribution to their constituents.	S Townsend	
<b>MBG1708.03</b>	Reason for no “Determination to Date” values being included in Capex Report for several items, resulting in 100% variance (e.g. 4310 BJ Cableway Update).	S Townsend	
<b>MBG1708.04</b>	Future Asset Services and Maintenance Updates to include future planned maintenance activities for the valley.	R Magaharan	
<b>MBG1708.05</b>	Customer concerns that what has been published on the DPI website with regard to the WRP process consultation does not accurately reflect what has occurred during the process (relating to inaccurate details on meeting venues, consultation and provision of documentation). D Stockler to convey customer concerns to DPI in the regular monthly WNSW/DPI forum.	D Stockler	
<b>MBG1708.06</b>	Additional information on the Snowy Licence Review to be provided to CAG members, with responses to be forwarded to Sonia as soon as possible (prior to 28 August deadline).	B Lathwell	<b>COMPLETE.</b>
<b>MBG1708.07</b>	More detail of the Local Water Utility (LWU) Review to be provided to CAG members prior to the March 2018 meeting.	G Begg	
<b>MBG1708.08</b>	WNSW to provide information on the current Murrumbidgee Valley loss assessment for review, including identification of contributing factors (which factors are measureable/aren't measurable) with a view to quantifying losses in the Murrumbidgee system. To be included as agenda item March 2018.	V Kelly	

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<b>MBG1708.09</b>	Condensed version (fact sheet) of the key issues associated with linked/tagged licences to be uploaded to the WaterNSW internet for the information of all customers.	V Kelly	
<b>MBG1708.10</b>	<p>WNSW to provide answers to the following re linked/tagged licences, for further discussion/review at the March 2018 meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What was initial intent of the linked/tagged rules?</li> <li>- Are there any unintended consequences of these rules?</li> <li>- Are the tagged/linked licences being utilised in the manner originally intended? (And if not, are there any advantages to a small number of account holders)?</li> <li>- If these licence holders receive an advantage, is this deemed to be unfair advantage? (And if so, should action be taken, and what action would that be)?</li> <li>- If proven that linked licences are providing licence holders with an unfair advantage, is there any opportunity for customers to pursue a possible change to these licences?</li> </ul>	V Kelly	