

Murrumbidgee Customer Advisory Group

TO BE RATIFIED AT MARCH 2019 MEETING

Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 18 September 2018 Quest, Griffith

Present: Brendan Barry (Chair), Peter Sheppard, Tanya Thompson, Helen Dalton, Nick Maynard, Scott Hogan, Debbie Buller, Karen Hutchinson, Hilton Taylor, Iva Quarisa, James Maguire, Paul Maytom, Jenny McLeod (observer), David Stockler, Jonathan Dickson, Vince Kelly, Sonia Townsend and Toni Hayes (minutes).

Ronan Magaharan, Luigi Castro, Mark Clayton and Graham Begg attended via Skype for specific agenda items.

Meeting Opened: 10.00am.

Welcome and introductions.

1. **Apologies:** Alan Shea, Richard Stott, Bruce Campbell.

Confirmation of Chairperson:

The Murrumbidgee CAG agreed to continue Chairmanship of Brendan Barry to the end of the current term of office, 30 June 2019.

2. **Confirmation of Agenda Items:**

- Refer to agenda item 10.

3. **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.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting, 20 March 2018:**

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on 20 March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.

*P Maytom/J Maguire
carried*

5. **Actions arising from minutes:**

- See action sheet attached.

6. **Water Delivery**

- 6.1 **Water System Operations Report (V Kelly)**

- WaterNSW provided a presentation on the operations plan for the Murrumbidgee including storage, supplementary access, water availability, rainfall, inflows, intravalley transfer, operational loss, storage forecasts, outage planning and flow targets. The plan is publicly available on WaterNSW's website at <http://www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations>.

- Customers sought clarity on account management of supplementary water and when it relates to individual licences within the valley. WaterNSW advised the water accounting system is based on assessing individual licence accounts and that is how it is applied. It was noted the wording in the Operations Plan may cause confusion and WaterNSW will amend.
- Resource assessment discussed. WaterNSW advised that the 554GL “loss” figure is an estimate and as the year progresses we may see an improvement in the allocation process if we are able to run the system more efficiently across the course of the year. Customers would like to see a breakdown of what the losses consist of (transmission loss vs operational surplus).
- Operational losses discussed. The term is used to describe surplus at the end of the system and is a loss in terms of the available resource in the regulated river valley. Customers noted the term is misleading and should be rebadged. Customers would like to see a dissection of the transmission losses and surplus losses as would be useful when educating constituents.

Action MBG1809.01: WaterNSW to provide historical information on the losses in the Murrumbidgee valley to customers out of session.

Responsibility: V Kelly

Action MBG1809.02: WaterNSW to provide a breakdown of operational losses in Operations Plans going forward.

Responsibility: V Kelly

6.2 Computer Aided River Management (CARM) Update (V Kelly)

- CARM is a computer modelling system WaterNSW is implementing to better provide forecasting, event flows, tributary modelling and water order/usage projections.
- With the CAIRO system, we could see what customers were actually doing, was a manual process, whereas CARM has a dashboard environment.
- CARM is currently in operation in the Murrumbidgee and CARM Lite will be rolled out across all regulated valleys.
- CARM Lite models are now being developed for all regulated systems in the state. The lite models have the same modelling functions to predict tribute inflows and river operations but lack more detailed knowledge around where water is going due to the lack of telemetered meters. The system will be set up to allow for this future function if it becomes available.
- Customers questioned whether the information will be broken down into what water is what (ie environmental/irrigation). WaterNSW advised this is not happening at the moment but is likely within the ability of CARM to provide.

7. System Operation and Asset Services

7.1 Asset Maintenance and Services Update (R Magaharan)

- Asset performance and maintenance in the Murrumbidgee presented and discussed, including breakdowns and defects, maintenance and upcoming works.

8. Presentations/Consultation

8.1 Drought Response (J Dickson)

- As part of the NSW Government’s Emergency Drought Relief, a rebate of up to \$4000 per licence for the fixed component of bills on general security and some supplementary licences will apply to **future** invoices. Customers don’t need to apply for this, the rebate will be automatically applied.
- Customers of ICDs for water entitlement costs are included and currently being negotiated with ICDs.

- For regulated river customers, the rebate will be applied equally over the next four bills. For unregulated and groundwater customers, the rebate will be applied to the next bill for 2017/18. High security and government licences are excluded.
- Visit <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/drougthub/emergency-drought-relief-package> for more information.

8.2 Regulatory Update (J Dickson)

Reform Update

- WaterNSW provided a recap on the water reform process to date. Draft WRAP regulations have been released and ongoing consultation with the Taskforce continues.

Ownership of Meters

- WaterNSW currently owns and maintains meters in the southern valleys and Nepean and Bega systems. Metering legislation passed in June 2018 created a framework under which a transfer of ownership may occur.
- WaterNSW acknowledges there are transitional issues to be worked through and is actively involved in preparing a framework.
- Customers raised significant concerns about underground meters in relation to accuracy, access, replacement and liability that may be transferred to customers.
- Concerns raised about maintenance charges that have been paid since installation, ongoing maintenance costs if going back to private ownership and costs of replacement as opposed to previous meters. This is causing a lot of angst amongst southern customers.
- Discussed potential in framework under which a transfer may occur to the works approval holder or other approved third-party entity.
- WaterNSW urged customers to raise concerns with DOIW at the next session.

Metering Policy

- The Taskforce is currently preparing a list of NMI-approved pattern approved meters. WaterNSW is seeking direction from the Taskforce to publish this on our website as per requests from our customers.
- WaterNSW's submission to the metering framework has been published at https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/162505/Water-reformconsultation-submission-178.pdf
- Draft metering regulations were released by the Taskforce on 27 August 2018.

8.3 Pricing Determinations (J Dickson)

- The **WAMC (Water Administration Ministerial Corporation) pricing determination** runs 2016-20 with functions split between DOIW, NRAR and WaterNSW. New pricing submissions are due by 30 June 2019 from each agency. Discussed.
- The **rural valleys pricing determination** runs from 2017-21, with submissions due to IPART 30 June 2020. WaterNSW will seek involvement from the CAGs on price modelling in early 2019. We will again seek to continue the journey towards customer choice.
- **IPART Cost Share Review:** IPART is reviewing how the costs of providing rural bulk water services is shared between water users and the NSW Government, following a beneficiary pays or impactor pays framework.

- A draft report is due in October 2018 with final report due February 2019. Any changes will impact the next WAMC and Rural Pricing Determinations and customers are urged to be involved in the process.
- With four determinations on the landscape (WAMC, W2BH, Greater Sydney and Rural), WaterNSW will be seeking customer input via CAGs from February 2019 to June 2020.

8.4 Voice of Customer Update (S Townsend)

- WaterNSW thanked customers for participating in the Voice of Customer survey. Over 700 customers were surveyed across the state and feedback is currently being collated.
- Some feedback specific to CAGs was that customers disliked the eCAG format indicating a preference for CAGs to meet face-to-face more frequently than twice per year. As such WaterNSW will hold three face-to-face meetings in 2019. This was welcomed by the CAG.

8.5 Levels of Service (LOS) Project Update (L Castro)

- A workshop was held with Murrumbidgee customers on 1 August 2018. Notes were circulated to participants on 16 August and any feedback can be sent to Luigi Castro (Luigi.Castro@waternsw.com.au).
- WaterNSW will engage a consultant to assist with the Future Trends study, high-level costing and economic analysis and will commence a LOS gap analysis and options development.
- Additional LOS workshops will be held with CAG members and stakeholders in Feb/Mar 2019.

8.6 Burrendong Temperature Curtain Update (M Clayton)

- Following extensive investigations into cause of failure and some subsequent design modifications the curtain was partially reinstated (due to low storage levels) and made operational in August 2018. Full reinstatement and testing will commence once water levels in the storage increases.
- More information is available at <https://www.waternsw.com.au/projects/burrendong>.

8.7 Nimmie-Caira SDL Project (M Clayton)

- The NSW Government acquired 19 parcels of land in Nimmie-Caira (on behalf of the Commonwealth) as an SDL project associated with the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan. WaterNSW operates and maintains 60 assets within the system.
- Out of the 60 impacted assets, only four are located on or near the Murrumbidgee River and are required to deliver water to both the Nimmie-Caira and regulated customers. The other remaining impacted assets are used to manage flows within the Nimmie-Caira system on behalf of the environmental water holders.
- WaterNSW is working with DOI Water to legally discharge its obligations with respect to operating and delivering water within the Nimmie-Caira footprint. No impact is expected to Lowbidgee customers as needs can be met by assets retained by WaterNSW.
- WaterNSW will divest the assets back to DOI Water. We may have future involvement in operating/maintaining the assets however this is unknown at this stage.

8.8 Fish Passage Ministerial Taskforce Update (M Clayton)

- WaterNSW provided an update on the Fish Passage Ministerial Taskforce. A strategic business case has been drafted with target completion October 2018 and approval process 2018/19.

8.9 Local Water Utility (LWU) Monitoring Review (G Begg)

- WaterNSW provided an update on the LWU Monitoring Review. Forty-two surveys have been completed to date.
- Emerging themes include strong interest in an active notification mechanism, potential for WaterNSW to act as a hub for data sharing and potential to supplement monitoring program by adding instruments to existing hydrometric stations.
- Review to be completed December 2018 with an update to be provided to CAGs early 2019.

8.10 Wentworth to Broken Hill Pipeline (W2BHP) Update (J Dickson)

- WaterNSW provided an update on the W2BH Pipeline Project. Completion of pump stations is well progressed and project currently on track for completion at the end of the year.
- Customers questioned whether this will be a new entitlement in the Murray. WaterNSW confirmed this and noted that licensing arrangements are underway as to how this will happen and this currently sits with DOIW as WaterNSW cannot licence its peers.

8.11 CAG Term of Office

- The current CAG term of office ends 30 June 2019. WaterNSW will call for nominations for the 2019-2022 CAG during February 2019.
- WaterNSW encourages current members to renominate and invites other interested customers to nominate through their respective nominating organisations/water user groups.

9. Reports

Noted and taken as read.

10. General Business

10.1 Water Quality

- Algal alerts can be found on WaterNSW's website at <https://www.watensw.com.au/water-quality/algae>. Alerts are updated whenever there is a result.

10.2 Productivity Commission Review

- The Productivity Commission has released its draft report into the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Mayor Maytom highlighted to members that this is the biggest project undertaken in relation to water reform and urged communities to take more ownership in the process to ensure they get the best outcomes available. There is \$4.9B left to be spent by 2024 and members were urged to have their say.
- The review notes the development of WRPs is behind schedule and seeks to extend the deadline.
- WaterNSW advised that it has reviewed the report. The Productivity Commission will hold public hearings during October 2018.

10.3 Environmental Water

- Customers sought information and understanding of what is happening with the potential for environmental water to have productive use - how it works, how much water is in the dam for the environment, etc.
- WaterNSW noted the resource breakdown is available on page 8 of the operations plan and information is also available on the DOI website.
- The CEWO noted there has been mixed feedback from different parts of the community, some indicating it should be kept for the environment, some indicating it should be available to irrigators, others noting it may interfere with the market. Discussed.
- The held environmental water component is quite small and CEWO entitlements are the same as for irrigators. If there is some mechanism by which general security entitlements can be taken, that is fine with the current government.

Meeting Review and Close

Next Meetings: **eCAG:** Thursday 29 November 2018 (Skype)
 Face to Face: Thursday 21 March 2019 (Griffith)

Meeting closed: 1.20pm

DRAFT

Carried Forward Actions			
Action No. yymm.action no	Action	Responsibility	Status
MBG1803.03	WaterNSW to put together a proposal/process for equitable sharing of supplementary events between specific licence types and on what basis it can be done.	V Kelly	Ongoing.

New Actions			
Action No. yymm.action no	Action	Responsibility	Status
MBG1809.01	WaterNSW to provide historical information on the losses in the Murrumbidgee valley to customers out of session.	V Kelly	
MBG1809.02	WaterNSW to provide a breakdown of operational losses in Operations Plans going forward.	V Kelly	