

Murray-Lower Darling Customer Advisory Group

Notes of Meeting
Thursday 29 November 2018
Via Skype

Participants: John Lolicato, Alan Mathers, Sally Dye, Louise Burge, Hilary Johnson, Michael Telford, Katharine McBride, Nerida Healy, Ashley Senn (observer), Vince Kelly, Amber Daines, Jonathan Dickson and Toni Hayes.

Apologies: Geoff Mann, Andrew Kelly, Judith Damiani, Rachel Strachan.

Meeting Opened: 1.30pm

1. Update on actions from the last meeting (20 September 2018)

- See action sheet attached.

2. Water System Operations Update

- WaterNSW presented the water operations plans for the Murray and Lower Darling. Reports are available on WaterNSW's website at www.waturnsw.com.au/operations
- Customers stated the wording in the opening statement (highlights) of the Lower Darling report is misleading and requested WaterNSW amend.

Action MLD1811.01: WaterNSW to look at wording in first paragraph of Lower Darling Operations Plan (highlights) and amend as appropriate.

Responsibility: V Kelly

- Dartmouth Dam is 78 per cent full – falling – holding 3,003 Gigalitres (GL). NSW share of this water is approximately 28%. Release through August averaged approximately 2,700 ML/day.
- Dartmouth to Hume transfers commenced mid-August.
- Hume Dam is 43 per cent full – falling – holding 1,303 GL. NSW share of this water is approximately 39%. Release through August averaged approximately 14,150 ML/d.
- Lake Victoria is currently holding about 551 GL or 78% of active capacity. The flow to South Australia is about 6,100ML/day.
- Predicted release pattern and operating conditions discussed.

3. Drought Communications (A Daines)

- WaterNSW has a number of dedicated resources available to customers providing updates and information on the drought, including a weekly regional customer drought update and valley storage levels. Customers can also opt to subscribe to receive updates.
- www.waturnsw.com.au/drought
- Drought subsidy/rebate around shared licences discussed. WaterNSW advised the rebate is per licence, not per WAL. There are questions around how this will be further applied, which has not yet been resolved. WaterNSW is well aware of the complexity and is working to find a result for shared licences.
- Future planning under drought scenarios discussed. Customers requested information for the 2019/20 season to come out earlier than in past years, given the current climate and challenges around access to water. WaterNSW will pass on customer feedback to DoI Water.

4. Active Management in Northern Unregulated Systems (J Dickson)

- The Water Reform Taskforce is continuing modelling and policy development in preparation for public consultation in 2019.
- Active management is determining what volume of flows can be accessed and when, in defined ways but with consideration of specific events. WaterNSW is involved in the working group developing active management.
- Active management is being considered in the Barwon-Darling first, which will inform work on Unregulated Macquarie-Bogan and Gwydir valleys.

5. DoI Water Update - Water Resource Plans (WRPs) (J Dickson)

- There are currently 5 draft WRPs on public exhibition. A further 3 plans will be released prior to Christmas, with remaining plans to be exhibited in 2019.

6. IPART Cost Shares Review update (J Dickson)

- The draft report was released on 16 October 2018 with submissions due to IPART on 27 November 2018.
- IPART took a strict interpretation of the impactor pays approach which, in most cases, shifts the cost share ratios towards customers.
- IPART stated that the impact on WaterNSW's rural determination would be a 1% increase in customer bills and a 7% increase for WAMC, however these percentages will not hold for future determinations, as the spend profile for each determination is different.
- Customers raised concerns that this goes against irrigators and doesn't factor in other users such as recreation, community, frogs, etc.
- Customers requested to see a copy of the original metering contract between the government and WaterNSW for original installation. Taken on notice.

Action MLD1811.02: *WaterNSW to confirm if it can provide customers with a copy of the contract on the metering project in the southern basin between WaterNSW and the government.*

Responsibility: J Dickson

7. New pages to register for (J Dickson)

- WaterNSW publishes a number of regular updates that customers can subscribe to, including the Customer Newsletter, weekly customer eNewsletter, state-wide customer notifications, weekly water availability reports, Murrumbidgee inter-valley trade (IVT) notifications and water storage and supply reports.
- Visit our website at www.waternsw.com.au/subscribe and select updates of interest to you.

Next Meeting: Wednesday 20 March 2019, Deniliquin

Meeting closed: 2.52pm

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Carried Forward Actions

Action No. yymm.action no	Action	Responsibility	Status
MLD1708.06	WNSW to confirm advice on stakeholder involvement in MDBA review process for airspace and capacity issues.	V Kelly	Ongoing. WaterNSW will consult with our customers through the CAG at the appropriate time.
MLD1809.01	WaterNSW to provide a breakdown of operational losses in Operations Plans going forward.	M Barratt	In progress.
MLD1809.02	WaterNSW to provide detail on end of system flow targets out of the end of the Murrumbidgee (actual flows vs target) at next meeting.	V Kelly	To be presented at March 2019 meeting.
MLD1809.03	WaterNSW to seek direction from Regulator/NRAR if customers will be in breach of conditions if they accessed groundwater but an allocation is received later in the season.	D Stockler	In progress. Awaiting response from NRAR.
MLD1809.04	WaterNSW to plan an additional LOS workshop for the Murray-Lower Darling prior to February 2019.	A Fraser	In progress. Planning is underway for early 2019, date to be confirmed.
MLD1809.05	WaterNSW to advise if the Wakool Regulator is included in the fish passage strategy.	M Clayton	Complete. The NSW Fish Passage Strategy has not included Wakool Offtake as one of the 160 identified sites. Wakool Offtake regulator was upgraded in 2012/13 and the original gates were replaced with lay flat gates. However, no fishway was constructed as it was agreed that a fish passage was not warranted as the regulator would not impede fish movement for the majority of the time.

MLD1809.06	WaterNSW to contact L Burge out of session to discuss environmental water delivery to the 18 indicator sites under the Basin Plan (as per agenda item 10.2).	V Kelly	Ongoing.
MLD1809.07	WaterNSW to advise DOI Water of customer concerns in relation to channel capacity constraints and channel sharing and request they issue a statement in relation to same.	A Langdon	In progress.
New Actions			
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