

Murrumbidgee Customer Advisory Group - Minutes of Meeting



Location: Quest Apartments, Townsend St, GRIFFITH

Date: 1 August 2019

Time: 9.00am

Present: Peter Sheppard, Steven Cunial, Brendan Barry, Scott Hogan, Hilton Taylor, James Maguire, Ian Lugsdin, Mark Brettschneider, Paul Maytom, Tanya Thompson, Bede Spannagle, Blake Edwards (observer), David Straccione (observer), Jenny McLeod (observer), Edwina Marks (observer), David Stockler, Jonathan Dickson, Vince Kelly, Dan Berry, Enrico Proietti and Toni Hayes (minutes).

B Mayhew and E Taylor attended via Skype for agenda item 3.1.

M Clayton and L Zaw attended for agenda item 3.2.

L Castro attended via Skype for agenda item 4.2.

Meeting Opened: 9.00am.

1. Introduction:

1.1 Welcome and introductions

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

1.2 Apologies

- Nick Maynard, Iva Quarisa.

1.3 Confirmation of Agenda Items

- Nil new agenda items raised.

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

- B Barry was nominated by P Sheppard and appointed to the position of Chairperson and CAG Representative unopposed. No other nominations received.

1.7 Minutes of Previous Meeting, 28 March 2019:

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on 28 March 2019 be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.

*P Sheppard/T Thompson
carried*

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1.8 Actions arising from minutes

- See action sheet attached.

2. Water Delivery:

2.1 Water System Operations Report (V Kelly)

- WaterNSW presented the operations plan for the Murrumbidgee valley including dam storage, water availability, inflows, inter valley transfer (IVT), transmission loss, outage planning and prognosis. The plan is available on WaterNSW's website at www.watensw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations.
- Transmission losses discussed. Forecast of losses has been included in the report as requested. Customers indicated it would be of benefit to have the metered volume added.

Action MBG1907.01: WaterNSW to add metered volume to the transmission losses graphs in the Operations Plan.

Responsibility: V Kelly

- Blue green algae discussed. The protocol is that announcements are made on red alerts only. Algae status alerts are available on WaterNSW's website at <https://www.watensw.com.au/water-quality/algae#stay>
- IVT discussed. WaterNSW advised that if account gets to 100GL then would be looking at a transfer in October. Suspect more likely to call water Jan/Feb. Customers noted that it should be clearly messaged that it is IVT water, with early communication prior to the event.

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.
- Drought operations and management will be discussed in detail at the River Operations Stakeholder Consultative Committee (ROSCCo) meeting following the CAG.
- Further information on the drought is available on WaterNSW's website at www.watensw.com.au/supply/drought-information

3. Assets:

3.1 Asset Maintenance and Services Update (E Taylor)

- Asset performance and maintenance in the Murrumbidgee valley presented and discussed, including safety improvements, maintenance delivery, breakdown/defects and upcoming works of note.
- Customers indicated they would be interested to see the sites first hand. WaterNSW will take on board and consider meetings that accommodate visits to sites if possible.

3.2 Annual Capital Plan (M Clayton)

- Murrumbidgee and Lowbidgee forecast and in progress renewal and replacements projects presented and discussed.
- WaterNSW will have a draft capital program to present to customers in November with final to be presented 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. Works deferred in the current regulatory period will be addressed as part of this process.

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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). Refer to attachment for locations.
- WaterNSW Fish Passage Optimisation Project update presented and discussed. Dam Safety Upgrade (DSU) projects that have existing s218 obligations to construct a fishway will commence once study complete. Fishway costs will be included in the next IPART determination.
- IPART's *Rural Water Cost Shares Report* proposes a greater user cost share for Environmental Planning and Protection Activity, which includes fishways. The existing 50% customer cost share is proposed by IPART to increase to 80%. In its response, WaterNSW opposed this approach as the changes impact heavily on its customers.

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 questioned whether the jury will only be made up of WaterNSW customers or if includes others. WaterNSW advised that any potential member must be a water user, however noted that the Government represents people who are not WaterNSW customers.
- WaterNSW is currently putting together a reference guide for people who may want to take part. It is envisaged that CAG members will still have significant input into pricing discussions.

4.2 Levels of Service update (L Castro)

- WaterNSW provided an update on the Levels of Service project, including project roadmap. Currently in the short-listing phase which will feed into cycle 2 workshop with Murrumbidgee customers.
- The cycle 2 workshop for the Murrumbidgee is proposed for November 2019, with the purpose to present findings and identify schemes customers would like included in the 2020 IPART pricing submission (*note: we will ask for funding to progress the options to a strategic business case, not to build the infrastructure*). Customers indicated 1 or 15 November in Griffith is preferred and suggested WaterNSW phone customers to ascertain availability.
- The 20 Year Infrastructure Options Study is available on WaterNSW's website at <https://www.waternsw.com.au/projects/infrastructure-studies/20-year-infrastructure-options-study>

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

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provided to IPART. WaterNSW will communicate findings and initiate follow up discussions with individual LWUs.

4.4 Fixed Fee Rebate update (E Proietti)

- 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>
- I Lugsdin questioned rules around co-held licences and commented that WaterNSW should notify all customers within a co-held licence of the rebate. WaterNSW noted the comment and advised that we are not privy to what arrangements are made between customers within a co-held licence.

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.
- Customers commented that DoIW engagement around metering has been disappointing. No engagement has been planned in the Murrumbidgee catchment, however numerous workshops have been held in the Murray. Communication of workshops has also been poor.
- Customers sought an update on hand back of state-owned meters. WaterNSW advised that the current intention is that the Government will hand back the meters. WaterNSW is committed to customer choice and will have individual conversations with all customers involved.
- The 1 December 2019 deadline applies to customers with large surface water pumps >500mm, which involves around 1200 WaterNSW customers. The timetable for compliance for other users will be a staged roll out and deadlines are unlikely to change.
- WaterNSW stressed that customers must be able to show a pathway to compliance, including demonstrable evidence that they are doing as much as they can to achieve compliance (quotes, correspondence).
- Verification of underground and in-channel meters discussed.
- Customers sought advice on the obligation of third-party pumpers in relation to compliance. WaterNSW advised that he/she who pumps has the obligation to meet regulations regardless of who owns the meter.
- Customers questioned who is responsible for compliance of state-owned meters where there is a dispute about the accuracy (over threshold). WaterNSW advised that the onus is on the owner of the meter to bring up to code before handover. Accuracy and compliance are not the same, the meter must still be compliant with standard AS4747.
- DPI has released a NSW Metering Guidance Tool for customers to ascertain requirements for compliance. It is available at <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/metering-framework>

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4.6 Water Insights Portal update (D Berry)

- As presented at the last meeting, WaterNSW has launched a new Water Insights Portal which is available on our website <https://www.waternsw.com.au/waterinsights/water-insights>
- Additional valleys have now gone live, with remaining sites to be live by end July 2019. 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.

4.7 iWAS improvements (J Dickson)

- 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.

5. Business Papers:

- Noted and taken as read.

6. General Business

6.1 River Capacity

- Customers questioned the potential for the capacity issues occurring in the Murray to happen in the Murrumbidgee. WaterNSW advised that the systems are very different and the risk is significantly less in the Murrumbidgee due to the system configuration.

6.2 Critical Water Advisory Panel (CWAP)

- Customers queried why there are no consumptive users on the CWAP. WaterNSW advised that the CWAP is run by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) (formerly OEH) and is primarily made up of agencies, including WaterNSW. Local government has recently been added.
- CWAPs have already been held in the north and as part of stage 2 drought planning will commence in the Murray and Murrumbidgee in the near future. Customer input and feedback from WaterNSW's ROSCCOs will feed into the CWAP.
- WaterNSW will pass on feedback that stakeholders would like to be part of the CWAP.

Meeting Review and Close

Next Meeting: Thursday 28 November 2019 (TBC)

Meeting closed: 1.10pm

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Murrumbidgee Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 1 August 2019

Carried forward actions

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	<p>In progress.</p> <p>A draft has been developed, which is currently under internal review. Will be finalised by the next meeting for customers to review.</p> <p>Included will be processes to quantify demand, thresholds, communication etc. Discussed.</p> <p>Customers requested that the proposal be released as soon as it is available rather than wait for the November CAG meeting.</p>

New actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
MBG1907.01	WaterNSW to add metered volume to the transmission losses graphs in the Operations Plan.	V Kelly	

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