

# Border Rivers Customer Advisory Group

## TO BE RATIFIED AT MARCH 2019 MEETING

### Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 29 August 2018  
Gateway to Training, Goondiwindi

**Present:** Brett Corish (Chair), David Coulton, Bruce Coward, Jane Humphries, Daryl Cleeve, Michael Owen, Ian Saunders, Ben Warby (observer), Tim Napier (observer), Neal Foster (observer), Jonathan Dickson, Dan Berry, Andrew Scott, Ken Gee, Emma Oates, Sonia Townsend and Toni Hayes (minutes).

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

**Meeting Opened:** 9.15am.

**Welcome and introductions.**

1. **Apologies:** Anthony Barlow, Mark Taylor, Lindsay White, Paul Maisey.

### Confirmation of Chairperson

The Border Rivers CAG agreed to continue Chairmanship of Brett Corish to the end of the current term of office, 30 June 2019.

2. **Confirmation of Agenda Items:**

- Nil additional agenda items tabled.

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, 28 February 2018:**

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on 28 February 2018 be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.

*D Coulton/T Napier  
carried*

5. **Actions arising from minutes:**

- See action sheet attached.

### 6. Water Delivery

#### 6.1 Water System Operations Report (K Gee)

- WaterNSW provided a presentation on the operations plan for the Border Rivers, including storage, supplementary access, water availability, rainfall, inflows, operational loss, storage forecasts, outage planning and prognosis. The plan is publicly available on WaterNSW's website at <http://www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations>.
- Customers noted that with recent system changes, navigating the daily water availability reports is not user friendly, particularly for phones and tablets. WaterNSW advised that this is a known issue and is currently being addressed by the vendor. Is work in progress.

- WaterNSW will undertake block releases west of Boomi throughout 2018/19 under current conditions. Supply on demand will be available upstream of Boomi with potential for final deliveries to be brought forward to February 2019.
- Operational surplus has been above target for a number of months with higher than usual deliveries west of Goondiwindi. About 7500ML flowed over Mungindi weir that was not picked up.
- Under current conditions it is likely Pindari Dam will be down to dead storage level by Feb/Mar 2019.
- There is no planned maintenance activity affecting deliverability.

## **6.2 Computer Aided River Management (CARM) Update (D Berry)**

- CARM is a computer modelling system WaterNSW is implementing to better provide forecasting, event flows, tributary modelling and water order/usage projections.
- WaterNSW advised it is changing the operating platform for the state. The current CAIRO program is an old system using old operating systems. With no change, we run the risk of operational systems shutting down. Discussed.
- CARM will be rolled out across all regulated valleys, with the Border Rivers in the development stage.

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

### **7.1 Asset Maintenance and Services Update (R Magaharan)**

- Asset performance and maintenance in the Border Rivers 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.
- 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/droughthub/emergency-drought-relief-package> for more information.
- Customers noted recent media involving release of environmental water made available for growing fodder crops and questioned equity and availability for all (not just those who have the funds to purchase). OEH advised that it was a straight-out sale with proceeds going to drought support, however also noted there is no licensed water in the Border Rivers. Discussed.
- It was recognised that not all people affected by the drought are WaterNSW customers.
- The CEWH has put out a media release indicating its plans to tender to sell 20GL of Commonwealth regulated allocations from the Goulburn Valley in Victoria, effective 3 September 2018.
- Customers were referred to CEWH and OEH websites for regular updates.

## 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.

### 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](https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/162505/Water-reformconsultation-submission-178.pdf)
- Draft metering regulations have now been released by the Taskforce.

## 8.3 Pricing Determinations (J Dickson)

- The **WAMC 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.
- 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.
- Some customers have indicated a preference for CAGs to meet face to face more frequently than twice per year and as such WaterNSW will hold three face-to-face meetings in 2019. Discussed. Customers indicated that meetings need to be relevant to each valley as more meetings take away from productive farm time.
- Border customers would prefer less meetings than more – citing that productive time on farm needs to be balanced with meetings like the CAG.
- WaterNSW advised that with four new pricing determinations on the horizon we need to engage with customers and present the same information to all valleys, keeping all customers informed. We are currently in an important period of transition with operational changes often meaning changes to the regulatory environment, which will have valley impacts. The Customer Advisory Groups are WaterNSW's primary forum for customer engagement.

#### **8.4 Levels of Service (LOS) Project Update (L Castro)**

- A workshop was held with Border Rivers customers on 30 May 2018.
- 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.

#### **8.5 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>.

#### **8.6 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. We won't have ownership.

#### **8.7 Fish Passage Ministerial Taskforce Update (M Clayton)**

- WaterNSW provided an update on the Fish Passage Ministerial Taskforce (as discussed at previous meetings). A strategic business case has been drafted with target completion October 2018 and approval process 2018/19.
- Customers questioned if there were any plans for the Border Rivers. WaterNSW advised that some of the fish passages extend right up the Darling and some on the Barwon-Darling. Will need to find specific barriers that have been nominated.

**Action BR1808.01:** WaterNSW to advise if any fish passage structures have been nominated in the Border Rivers.

Responsibility: M Clayton

#### **8.8 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.

#### **8.9 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.

### **8.10 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 QLD Water Accounting Systems**

- Customers advised that QLD is doing an independent review of its water accounting systems and with this comes an opportunity to affect some change for operators to better facilitate trade. QLD has determined their current systems are struggling in the modern context and are looking at new systems.
- Customers believe CARM is an illustration of a benefit to their systems and iWAS also provides a good platform for this to happen if it was widely available. Questioned with the review of iWAS underway if there was a platform/facility to allow for QLD to use that system as well. Is an opportunity to use the Border Rivers as a unique case study/pilot.
- Is also a unique opportunity to gain as much interstate alignment as possible, particularly given metering and compliance changes and the current transition under way.
- Customers have advocated for iWAS and WaterNSW will investigate internally.

#### **10.2 Eastern Recharge Available Water**

- For the information of CAG members, customers advised that the eastern recharge system has had a 50% reduction in AWDs this year. They lodged a submission in 2009 indicating that development would outgrow available water, which has now happened.
- At the Eastern Recharge WUA AGM it was decided to approach the CEWH to buy back sleeper licences for excess water to allow more water for active licences. Given the dry winter and lower than expected rainfall forecast this summer, there will be major issues in the eastern recharge system, currently 300% overcommitted already.
- The Eastern Recharge WUA will pursue through the CEWH.

#### **10.3 Fish Kill at Pindari Dam**

- Customers wanted it noted that the fish kill at Pindari Dam occurred due to the naturally occurring turnover of the lake. This is in order to guard irrigators from accusations that may be raised in the community at a later date.

### **Meeting Review and Close**

**Next Meetings:**      **eCAG:** Wednesday 28 November 2018 (TBC)

**Face to Face:** Wednesday 13 March 2019 (Goondiwindi)

**Meeting closed:** 12.00pm

### Carried Forward Actions

Action No. yymm.action no	Action	Responsibility	Status
	Nil carried forward actions.		

### New Actions

Action No. yymm.action no	Action	Responsibility	Status
BR1808.01	WaterNSW to advise if any fish passage structures have been nominated in the Border Rivers.	M Clayton	<p><b>COMPLETE.</b></p> <p>The following WaterNSW fish barrier sites for the <b>Border Rivers</b> are included in the fish passage strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boomi Weir</li> <li>• Goondiwindi Weir</li> <li>• Boggabilla Weir</li> <li>• Glenarbon Weir</li> <li>• Cunningham Weir</li> <li>• Bonshaw Weir</li> </ul> <p>The following WaterNSW fish barrier sites for the <b>Barwon-Darling</b> are included in the fish passage strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tilpa Weir (24)</li> <li>• Louth Weir (21)</li> <li>• Darling River Weir (20A)</li> <li>• Darling River Weir (29A)</li> <li>• Walgett Weir (Darling River)</li> <li>• Calmundy Weir (8)</li> <li>• Collarenebri Weir (5)</li> </ul>



Customer Advisory Group Coordinator  
02 6757 2552 | Toni.Hayes@waternsw.com.au

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Banarway Weir No 4</li><li>• Presburys Weir Darling River</li><li>• Camilaroy Weir</li><li>• Mungindi Weir</li></ul> <p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- This is a 20-year program.</li><li>- The strategy business case is in draft and has received no approvals yet and will need to go through an extensive process of gateway approvals prior to commencement.</li></ul>
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