

# Coastal-Hunter Customer Advisory Group - Minutes of Meeting



**Location:** WaterNSW, L9 420 George St, SYDNEY

**Date:** 9 July 2019

**Time:** 10.00am

**Present:** David Williams, Phillip Rudd, Chris Rooney, Ken Bray, Michelle Cavallaro, Stephen Osborn, Wayne Clarke (from noon), Justen Simpson (observer), David Stockler, Jonathan Dickson, Martin Prendergast, Emma Oates, Enrico Proietti and Toni Hayes (minutes).

D Berry attended via Skype for agenda item 2.2.

B Mayhew attended for agenda item 3.1-3.3.

M Clayton attended for agenda item 3.2.

C Butcher and B O'Neill attended for agenda items 3.1-3.3.

J Lam attended for agenda item 4.2.

**Meeting Opened:** 10.00am.

## 1. Introduction:

### 1.1 Welcome and introductions

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

### 1.2 Apologies

- Steve Guthrey, Axel Hanson, Shaughn Morgan, John Watson, Shane Gee, Graham Kennett, Rob Russell, Graham Forbes, Colin Hancock.

### 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

- Election of Chairperson to be held over to the next meeting due to lack of quorum.

### 1.7 Minutes of Previous Meeting, 5 March 2019:

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on 5 March 2019 be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.

*C Rooney/K Bray  
to be ratified at next meeting*

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## **1.8 Actions arising from minutes**

- See action sheet attached.

## **2. Water Delivery:**

### **2.1 Water System Operations Report (M Prendergast)**

- WaterNSW presented the operations plan for the Hunter, Bega/Brogo, Paterson and Toonumbar valleys including dam storage, water availability, inflows, outage planning and prognosis. The plan is publicly available on WaterNSW's website at [www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations](http://www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations).

### **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.
- Further information on the drought is available on WaterNSW's website at [www.waternsw.com.au/supply/drought-information](http://www.waternsw.com.au/supply/drought-information)

## **3. Assets:**

### **3.1 Asset Maintenance and Services Update (B Mayhew)**

- Asset performance and maintenance in the Hunter and Coastal valleys presented and discussed, including safety improvements, maintenance delivery, breakdown/defects and upcoming works of note.

### **3.2 Annual Capital Plan (M Clayton)**

- WaterNSW has committed to providing customers with visibility of Annual Capital Plans for feedback prior to WaterNSW Board approval.
- North Coast, South Coast and Hunter valleys forecast, completed and in progress projects and new candidate projects presented and discussed.
- FY22-FY25 IPART Pricing Submission – 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 period will be addressed as part of this process. Works deferred in the current determination in the Hunter due to funding shortfall will be prioritised.

## **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).
- Treasury declined an application to fund the final business case preparation and DPI Fisheries is currently pursuing alternative funding. Potential funding options discussed.
- WaterNSW Fish Passage Optimisation Project update presented.

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### **3.3 Lostock to Glennies Creek Pipeline update (B O'Neill)**

- WaterNSW provided an update on the Lostock to Glennies Creek pipeline as per action CVH1903.02, including funding deed process, project plan timeline (currently up to feasibility), hydraulic modelling impacts, strategic business case process and future pricing implications.
- Customers highlighted that communication has been an issue with a media release published prior to any customer consultation and the local member indicating it was going ahead. WaterNSW noted that due diligence needs to be done, including a strategic business case (due February 2020). Once a final business case is done, consultation will occur. It is believed this will be over a long period of time.
- The pipeline is included in WaterNSW's 20 Year Infrastructure Options Study and has been prioritised.

## **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.

### **4.2 Levels of Service update (J Lam)**

- WaterNSW provided an update on the Levels of Service project. Currently in the short-listing phase which will feed into cycle 2 workshop with North Coast, South Coast and Hunter customers.
- There are two proposed options for cycle 2 workshops for the 3 areas, with the purpose to present findings and identify projects customers would like included in the 2020 IPART pricing submission. Customers expressed a preference for Option 2, holding individual workshops in each valley by end November. Noted. WaterNSW noted that if coming out to the regions was preferred, we would be relying on members to spread the word, and bring others to the meeting, as attendance helped ensure the value of these meetings.
- Customers highlighted communication issues with getting the word out to the broader customer base for attendance, with many members of water user organisations unknown.
- Members highlighted that the pilot LOS workshops held on the North Coast were not successful, with customers indicating it was too long and a waste of their time. Suggested future workshops need to be robust and meaningful if WaterNSW wants active engagement and so customers have confidence in the process.
- Customers suggested adding a meeting notification with the next customer invoice/mailout.

### **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 with the purpose of identifying what/if any additional monitoring can be done to notify LWUs of what water quality is coming down river. This review is now complete and a report has been provided to IPART.
- WaterNSW will communicate findings and initiate follow up discussions with individual LWUs.

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#### 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>

#### 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. To date there has been no discussion of change to the 1 December 2019 deadline for compliance of meters >500mm.
- 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.
- 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>

#### 4.6 Water Insights Portal update (J Dickson)

- 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

- 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.
- Members requested time be made available in future meetings to discuss what the OPEX categories are made up of so customers can have a better understanding of the numbers going into the next pricing determination. To be added to the next agenda.

**Action CVH1907.01:** WaterNSW to present detailed information on the OPEX categories at the next meeting.

Responsibility: A Sharkey

#### 6. General Business

##### 6.1 Activation of Hunter River Environmental Water Allocation (M Cavallaro)

- NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) provided a presentation on the proposed release from Glenbawn Dam of its environmental water allowance (EWA) for fish migration, planned for August 2019. This water has not been activated in the past.
- The proposal is open for community comment until 21 July 2019, with drop-in sessions to be held in Singleton and Muswellbrook. Feedback can also be submitted to DPIE via its website.
- A decision on the release will be made by 26 July 2019 and if the proposed flow goes ahead there will be a media announcement.

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- DPIE is also looking to establish a stakeholder advisory group to inform future delivery of environmental water in the Hunter.

### **Meeting Review and Close**

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday 6 November 2019 (TBC)

**Meeting closed:** 2.15pm

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## Coastal-Hunter Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 9 July 2019

Carried forward actions			
Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
CVH1811.01	Follow up customer concerns in relation to pumping threshold control points that are not telemetered.	M Prendergast	<b>In progress.</b> WaterNSW to take to Metering Standards group.
CVH1903.01	WaterNSW to investigate issues raised in relation to Shannonbrook Weir and advise Coastal-Hunter CAG.	R Walker	<b>Complete.</b> WaterNSW has investigated the site and spoken to the local landholder whose land we will need to use to access the weir. The drop boards will be replaced and a locking mechanism installed so they cannot be removed unintentionally or without authority. We will source, and install, a blanking flange over the scour pipe.  In regards to the desilting, we are still considering this as it seems the weir is no longer used for irrigation.
CVH1903.02	WaterNSW to provide an update on the proposed Lostock to Glennies Creek pipeline to the Coastal-Hunter CAG.	A Fraser	<b>Complete.</b> Refer to agenda item 3.3.
CVH1903.03	Provide licence number and details to WaterNSW (Toni Hayes) to investigate clarification on harvestable rights dams.	D Cliff	<b>Complete.</b> The issue has been addressed with the customer out of session.

New actions			
Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
CVH1907.01	WaterNSW to present detailed information on the OPEX categories at the next meeting.	A Sharkey	To be added to agenda for next meeting.

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