

# Gwydir Customer Advisory Group Minutes of Meeting



**Location:** Video Conference

**Date:** 21 July 2020

**Time:** 9.00am

**Present:** Mark Winter (Chair), Jim Cush, David Reibel, Sam Heagney, Daryl Albertson, Lindsay White, Nick Gillingham, Anub Nair, Jane Humphries (observer), Zara Lowien (observer), Jonathan Dickson, Toni Hayes, Enrico Proietti, Towela Mbirimi, Stevan Munic, Anne-Maree Burke, Kim-Maree Grech, Vindesh Nadan, Amanda Fuller.

The following staff attended for specific agenda items: A Fisher (2.2), D Swift-Hoadley (2.4), B Mayhew (3.1), C Braddock (3.2).

**Meeting Opened:** 9.00am.

## 1. Introduction:

### 1.1 Welcome and introductions

1.2 **Apologies:** Harry Cush.

### 1.3 Confirmation of Agenda Items

- The annual election of Chairperson will be carried over to the next face-to-face meeting.

### 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 Minutes of Previous Meeting, 17 March 2020:

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on 17 March 2020 be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.

*D Albertson/D Reibel  
carried*

### 1.6 Actions arising from minutes

- See action sheet attached.

## 2. Presentations/Consultation:

### 2.1 Regulatory Economics – Pricing Determination Engagement (J Dickson)

#### Rural Determination:

- As discussed at previous meetings, members supported WaterNSW's proposal of a 2-year determination, locking in WaterNSW revenues at 20/21 levels (noting inflation), deferral of Customer Juries and adjusting the 20-year rolling average and IPART cost shares.
- The only change to these proposed principles in the Final Draft submitted to IPART is the change from a 2-year determination to a 1-year determination. During preparations with IPART it became clear a 2-year deferral would not be supported.
- The Customer Jury process has been paused for the time being and will be revisited in due course.

---

#### Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at [waternsw.com.au](http://waternsw.com.au)

Follow us on Twitter [@WaterNSW](https://twitter.com/WaterNSW)

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at [oursay.org/waternsw](https://oursay.org/waternsw)

[waternsw.com.au](http://waternsw.com.au)

### **WAMC (Water Administration Ministerial Corporation) Determination:**

- WaterNSW has heard broad consistency from customers on the key messages proposed around transparency (understanding what you are paying for across Agencies), cost reflectivity (paying a fair price reflective of the costs to deliver) and value for money (to provide least cost solutions).
- There is no change to these proposed principles in the Final Draft, which was submitted to IPART on 30 June 2020.
- NRAR and DPIE will make a joint submission to IPART, however there will be a single determination made for all Agencies.
- WaterNSW's submissions will be published as part of IPART's review process at [www.ipart.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au)

### **2.2 Major Projects Update (A Fisher)**

- As previously advised, in October 2019 the Prime Minister and NSW Premier announced the planning and delivery of three new or augmented dams in NSW (Wyangala Dam raising, and construction of new dams on the Mole River and Dungowan Creek). The projects have been identified as Critical State Significant Infrastructure (CSSI) projects in the *Water Supply (Critical Needs) Act 2019*.
- The projects are focussed around drought resilience to provide significant improvement in water security and reliability, flood mitigation improvements downstream of Wyangala Dam and potential benefits to the Barwon-Darling system.
- Delivery timelines, project delivery models, current status, program challenges, key delivery milestones and community and stakeholder engagement presented and discussed.
- The projects have been fast-tracked with early works to commence October 2020 and main wall construction expected October 2021. There will be more detailed consultation with CAGs and community groups as the projects progress.
- Members queried where the new water in Mole River Dam will come from. WaterNSW advised this is part of the work being undertaken with DPIE, including operational rules, how it fits in with the Regional Water Strategy (RWS) and WSP etc. The catchment and dam sit within NSW, however there is complexity with the Border Rivers Commission and cross-border relationships. The project is about developing a final business case, not construction.
- Members noted the project still claims to benefit the Barwon-Darling system without proven benefits and queried whether there will be an environmental account in the dam. There is a lot more work to be done before any environmental benefits can be proven, including trade-off for irrigators and effect on supplementary and floodplain harvesting.
- Members questioned if there has been consultation with the MDBA in relation to the SDL. WaterNSW advised there is still a lot of work to be done around the modelling and the MDBA, as a key stakeholder, will be consulted.
- Members questioned why the work is being done when reductions across the northern basin have already been agreed on, stating the dam will surely have an impact on reductions and cause further reductions for irrigators. WaterNSW agreed it is very complex.

---

#### **Contact us**

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at [waternsw.com.au](http://waternsw.com.au)

Follow us on Twitter [@WaterNSW](https://twitter.com/WaterNSW)

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at [oursay.org/waternsw](https://oursay.org/waternsw)

### **Western Weirs Program (A Fisher)**

- The NSW Government has committed to funding the development of a strategic business case to look at holistic management and operation of the weirs in the Barwon-Darling unregulated and Lower Darling regulated systems to support remote community water supplies and environmental and other benefits.
- The program has been identified as a CSSI Project (per previous agenda item) and is in the very early stages. Current status and key project delivery milestones presented and discussed.
- Members queried whether the capacity of the weir pools currently in the river is known. WaterNSW advised that a lot of data has been collected that will inform the development of that model.
- Members asked how the Western Weirs Program will link with the Northern Basin Toolkit measures with specific reference to fishways. WaterNSW advised the project works in partnership with DPIE and we are also working closely with NSW Fisheries and DPIE-EES to ensure they are complementary. Timeframes are still a way out, still at the strategic business case stage, so part of the conversation with NSW Fisheries will be around timeframes.

### **2.3 CAG/ROSCCo Update (J Dickson)**

- During the last CAG round, members questioned the background of the ROSCCos and why WaterNSW was holding 2 meetings when members previously gained the information they valued in the one meeting.
- Recent Government reports indicated that finding information on operational water issues is not easy for many community members. In response, WaterNSW has adapted the drought format of ROSCCos as a means of reaching a wider audience, including local irrigators, large employers and water related businesses.
- WaterNSW surveyed ROSCCo attendees in recent meetings for feedback. There was broad acceptance that the ROSCCo is a useful forum to communicate river operations and education, incorporating broader community participation.
- WaterNSW has agreed that where possible, ROSCCo meetings will follow immediately after a CAG, however there will be times when they will not align due to operational requirements. When not aligned, a water operations update will be provided at the CAG.
- Members stated that community interest is an important part of the ROSCCo forum, with broader community input and the benefit of education being a valued component.
- Members questioned whether the membership of the ROSCCo will change. There are no plans to change membership at this point.
- Members stated that there are often critical operational discussions coming in or out of the drought and questioned which forum this discussion should sit in. Is not happening at the CAG anymore however if there is broad community involvement in the ROSCCo, not sure the conversation should be had there either. WaterNSW needs to ensure the messaging is where it needs to be and some of those conversations are difficult in a broader forum.

### **2.4 Water Reform Implementation Plan (WRIP) Update (D Swift-Hoadley)**

#### **Metering update:**

- The Water Renewal Taskforce was disbanded on 30 June 2020 with WaterNSW overseeing the operational implementation of the reform.

---

#### **Contact us**

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at **[waternsw.com.au](http://waternsw.com.au)**

Follow us on Twitter **@WaterNSW**

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at **[oursay.org/waternsw](https://oursay.org/waternsw)**

- Irrigation Australia has a list of certified meter installers on its website [www.irrigationaustralia.com.au/](http://www.irrigationaustralia.com.au/) and WaterNSW has developed a DQP portal for Duly Qualified Persons to enter validation certification.
- There is a list of compatible data logging and telemetry devices (LIDs) and solutions on DPIE's website at <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/metering/telemetry/list-of-compatible-data-logging-and-telemetry-devices-and-solutions>. WaterNSW's DAS (data acquisition service) is a cloud-based system to securely collect and store water usage data.
- New reporting and recording obligations are being introduced and updated work approval and licence conditions are being mailed out (refer agenda item 2.6).
- Customers should be aware that start dates for metering compliance still apply. Existing licence and approval conditions apply until the new dates come into effect.
- To be compliant, customers need to be aware of their compliance dates, understand their approval and obligation, engage a DQP to discuss options and lodge relevant certificates and understand their recording and reporting obligations.
- Discussed use of telemetry and requirements for connectivity and dial-in. If your due date comes up, you will need a new LID to send telemetry to WaterNSW. Customers are strongly advised to liaise with a DQP on what is appropriate for their individual situation. CAGs will be updated as information becomes available.
- WaterNSW has been working with vendors on LIDs and meter manufacturers are working with them. There are currently 3 on the approved list and will be available by the vendor. DQPs will be able to order through the DQP portal from mid-July. It is estimated there will be 1200 sites requiring this for 1 December. WaterNSW has been talking to manufacturers of LIDs and who advise they have enough in the country to meet demand.
- Members questioned if there have been discussions with DQPs (including IAL) around the likelihood of meeting the timeframes if devices cannot be supplied by the vendor. Customers want to be confident that the discussion about achievability of meeting the requirements is happening between WaterNSW and DPIE.
- To be compliant, customers must be able to show NRAR they have engaged a DQP and are working through available options. The obligation to become compliant sits with water users.
- Members questioned whether there is any likelihood the due dates will change again, with customers being told the industry will likely be unable to meet the timeframes. Customers don't want to see the same this happen as last year where the deadline is changed close to the due date. WaterNSW is not aware of any discussion to change the timeframe for compliance.

## **2.5 Fixed Fee Rebate update (E Proietti)**

- The NSW Government has confirmed the fixed fee rebate will again be applied to WaterNSW invoices for approved users. WaterNSW continues to advocate for further rebates to assist those with no access to water.
- The rebate will be applied quarterly to bills for 2020/21, up to \$1000 per quarter for regulated, and on the annual bill for those customers applicable for unregulated and groundwater. Customers do not need to do anything in order to receive the rebate.
- For more information go to [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/droughthub](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/droughthub)

---

### **Contact us**

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at [waternsw.com.au](http://waternsw.com.au)

Follow us on Twitter [@WaterNSW](https://twitter.com/WaterNSW)

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at [oursay.org/waternsw](http://oursay.org/waternsw)

## **2.6 WSP Conditions Notice (J Dickson)**

- Conditions notifications are being prepared with DPIE to send notifications over the next few months (timeline presented).
- Formal notification is the trigger for the additional conditions to come into effect.

## **3. Assets:**

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

- Asset performance and maintenance in the Gwydir valley presented and discussed, including routine preventative and corrective maintenance delivery.

### **3.2 Rural Pricing Submissions: FY22 & FY23-26 Capital Plans (C Braddock)**

- As discussed at agenda item 2.1, IPART has indicated that a 1-year deferral is required, so there will be a 1-year Pricing Submission for FY22 (due 30 June 2020) followed by a 4-year Pricing Submission for FY23-26 (due 30 June 2021).
- The capital budget for the Gwydir Valley FY22 Pricing Submission will be increased to include the renewals and replacement allowance, Copeton Dam spillway investigations and post-completion of spillway scouring investigations and DSU offsets relating to design and construction of 4 fishways.

## **4. Business Papers:**

- Noted and taken as read.

## **5. General Business:**

- Nil new business raised.

## **Meeting Review and Close**

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday 10 November 2020

**Meeting closed:** 10.45am

---

### **Contact us**

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at [waternsw.com.au](http://waternsw.com.au)

Follow us on Twitter [@WaterNSW](https://twitter.com/WaterNSW)

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at [oursay.org/waternsw](https://oursay.org/waternsw)

## Gwydir Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 21 July 2020

### Carried forward actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
	Nil carried forward actions.		

### New actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
	Nil new actions.		

### Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at [waternsw.com.au](http://waternsw.com.au)

Follow us on Twitter [@WaterNSW](https://twitter.com/WaterNSW)

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at [oursay.org/waternsw](https://oursay.org/waternsw)