

**Location:** Teleconference

**Date:** 12 September 2019

**Time:** 1.00pm

**Present:** Adrian Langdon, Alan Whyte, Alice Jarrett, Andrew Wall, Barb Arnold, David Straccione, Katharine McBride, Michael Wrathall, Nerida Healy, Paula Dsantos, Rachel Strachan, Sarah Jardine, Vince Kelly, Wayne Smith, Joe Pera, Tracey Schultz (Minutes)

**Apologies:** Hilton Taylor, James Dyer.

**Meeting commenced:** 1.00pm

### 1. General discussion by Stakeholders

Lack of reference has been made to General Security carryover. Carryover water in accounts should only be physical water that is available.

Carryover has been lost through evaporation but is not recognised in the management of accounts. **Action : Michael Wrathall to take this issue up within the Department.**

Confirmation of previous minutes and review of action items. Please see table below for updates.

Action 1.7.5 - DPIE held a meeting at Wilcannia on 5th September on the changes to requirements for meters in non-urban areas. Feedback received was that it was well attended but there was a lack of trust around what was being discussed. Participants still felt a lack of consultation around significant issues in key areas. It was noted that the department had no current plans to have any consultation with down stream of Bourke water users, hence lack of commitment to run the river as a whole.

Action 1.7.6 – Initial plans to hold a water sharing plan public meeting at Pooncarie on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September. This had to be postponed due to the delay in the final NRC report on the Barwon-Darling water sharing plan. There are many drought and water meetings being

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held/planned around the state and organisers are trying to find the best way forward to hold these. Discuss a range of consultation plans.

Barwon Darling to Lower Darling water users – WaterNSW will communicate through the ROSCCo group once dates are finalised. It was noted that a possible longer session to be held in Menindee to incorporate both regions, including drought update session as well.

Discussion held around the outcomes of the block banks currently in place. Documentation to be collated and feedback provided to the group towards the end of the drought process.

Poor water quality is forming in Lake Wetherell. Risk management being carefully looked at.

Water cartage was discussed. To service a number of properties with water in a single load, on average approximately 60,000 litres would be required via B-Doubles. The rebate is currently only being available for stock purposes. **Action : Michael Wrathall to investigate options of expanding the rebate program.**

Discussion around some areas not in drought but rather "in recovery". What difference would this make in the rebates/water delivery. **Action : Michael Wrathall to confirm recovery status does not impact access to assistance**

Question as to whether applications fees for ground water access have been waived. It was noted that a backlog of applications for hydro geographical assessments in the system due to increased activity. **Action : Michael Wrathall to enquire about Government support**

Essential Water extracting from Copi Hollow for as long as possible. The current forecast considers it possible to extract down to a volume of 3,500ML– based on this assumption end of October in the forecast end date of supply However, this is a worst case scenario and it is possible that access will extend below 3,500 ML.

LIDAR and Bathymetric surveys have been undertaken in the past few weeks to confirm storage and capacity. A report is due to WaterNSW in the coming weeks.

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Jamesville is still seeing water flowing through the pipes. Currently at 0.9M. Static level around 700mm, so there is still a bit of active storage. There are a few weeks to go until the end of the citrus season (3-4 weeks), so looks likely the water will be enough to get through to the harvest. There will be no future watering of permanent plantings beyond harvest.

Fisheries have commenced the Electro fishing process around the block bank areas and transporting these fish downstream to safe havens in the Murray region. Other areas have been identified to monitor for future fish rescues.

Murray/Lower Darling submissions are currently open till 13<sup>th</sup> October. If the closing date remains, the submissions will be closed before the meetings in the Lower Darling area are held. Action : **Michael Wrathall to investigate options of extending closing date for submissions.**

Flood Plain Harvesting – no current plans for Lower Darling river users. Michael Wrathall has provided details for the Webinar which is to be held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September from 10.30am – 3.00pm.

## **2. Drought Status and Operations in 2019-20 was presented throughout the meeting**

Vince Kelly (WaterNSW) gave a presentation to the meeting (emailed prior to the meeting) on the Drought Status & Operations in 2019-20:

- 2.1 Current Storage Levels and predictions under various scenarios
- 2.2 Critical water needs in 2019-20
- 2.3 S & D Replenishment flows
- 2.4 Treatment of tributary inflows
- 2.5 Potential infrastructure options or other actions for managing the drought
- 2.6 Groundwater issues and water quality issues

**Next meeting** – continue monthly – suggestions of out of sessions

**Meeting Review and Close**

**Next meeting: 10 October 2019 1.00pm**

**Meeting Closed at 2.00pm**

Presentation is available on the internet [Lower Darling Presentation 12/9/19](#) and is also attached.

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**New actions**

<b>Action number</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Resp.</b>	<b>Status</b>
1.9.19	Carryover has been lost through evaporation but is not recognised in the management of accounts.	Michael Wrathall	Take issue up within the Department.
2.9.19	Water cartage rebate is currently only available for stock purposes. Areas in recovery – what difference does this make to access to rebates/assistance.	Michael Wrathall	Investigate options of expanding the rebate program and enquire as to areas in recovery re rebates/assistance.
3.9.19	Ground water access application fees – can these be waived.	Michael Wrathall	Enquire about Government support available.
4.9.19	Murray/Lower Darling submissions are currently open till 13 <sup>th</sup> October. Can this be extended.	Michael Wrathall	Submissions from the Lower Darling will be extended beyond the current deadline of 13 October 2019 to ensure reasonable opportunity following the public meeting at Menindee.

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### Carried forward actions

Action number	Action	Resp.	Status
1.7.10	<p>Menindee had received rebates for tank infrastructure and plumbing costs.</p> <p>Many landholders in the Lower Darling have incurred similar costs but without government support – could the rebate be extended to a larger area?</p> <p>Menindee residents were given access to funds to pay for tanks (rebate).</p> <p>Should these rebates be applicable for Lower Darling as well?</p>	<p>Michael Wrathall</p>	

2.9.19

Send	From	Tracey.Schultz@watnsw.com.au
	To	Lower Darling ROSCCo invite listing
	Cc	
Subject		Action item drought recovery funding eligibility

Good afternoon all,

Please see below response from Michael Wrathall in relation to “Action 2.9.19 – Water cartage rebate is currently only available for stock purposes. As for areas in recovery – what difference does this make to access to rebates/assistance” with the action being “investigate options of expanding the rebate program and enquire as to areas in recovery re rebates/assistance” on the recently sent notes.

“The drought assistance measures are currently available to all eligible primary producers regardless of the status on the map. Maps are not used to assess eligibility. Also the drought transport subsidy is available for eligible primary producers for stock **and** domestic use. See extract from drought hub below.”

#### *Drought Transport Subsidy*

*The NSW Government’s transport subsidy can be applied to the cost of transporting fodder, water to a property for stock or domestic use, stock to and from agistment, and stock to sale or slaughter. For applications received from 1 July 2019 the subsidy also includes transporting of farm chemicals, fertiliser and seed to farms.*

Further advice provided:

*“Being in the CDI category of recovery will not directly affect their eligibility for funding. The system is only for general guidance and should not be linked directly to decisions about funding without other information. For the region in question, they have managed drought for a 12 month or greater period up until some sporadic rainfall over the last few months. Any benefits from that rainfall in terms of producing dry matter and recharge of farm water resources may be very temporary and quite isolated. We are actively monitoring this region and are also actively verifying the quality of rainfall data in that region as we have concerns about its quality. We would be very happy to touch base with producers in the region and get them to utilise the [FarmTracker](#) application to assist us with this process.”*

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