

Macquarie-Cudgegong Customer Advisory Group - Minutes of Meeting



Location: The Exchange, Dubbo

Date: 12 July 2022

Time: 10.30am

Present: Lyn Davies (acting Chair), Tim Gainsford, Frank McKillop, Greg Murie, Julian Geddes, Michael Drum, Nerida Sloane (observer), Martin Brooks, Ajantha Prathab, Douglas Juma, Emma Oates, Jonathan Dickson, Enrico Proietti, Emma Oates and Toni Hayes.

The following attended for specific agenda items: Brian Mayhew, Lindy Zaw, Ian Forbes (DPE), Suzy Lykos (DPE), Chloe Barclay (DPE), Andrew Howe (NRAR), Keeley Reynolds (NRAR), Dan Berry, Keara McDonagh-Aiken (DPE), Ray Boynton (DPE).

Meeting Opened: 10.30am.

1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome and introductions

1.2 Acknowledgement of Country

1.3 Apologies: Stewart Denston, David Ramsay, Michael Peat, Claire Cam, Simon Earl, Jason Wilson, David Frith, Tim Hosking, Paul Keyte, Rick Reid.

1.4 Confirmation of Agenda Items:

1.5 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.

1.6 CAG Member Introduction/Information (J Dickson):

- WaterNSW welcomed continuing and new members to the new CAG term and explained CAG member roles and responsibilities, Code of Conduct, CAG format and schedule, CAG communication processes (notification of meetings, member sitting fees and mileage claims) and CAG Chairperson role and responsibilities. A detailed explanation of WaterNSW's role and responsibilities, including the CAG Charter, was also presented.
- Members were reminded the CAG is not a decision-making body but an engagement and consultation forum for WaterNSW to regularly consult and gain feedback from our customers on issues relevant to our performance and delivery of services, including but not limited to system operations, pricing, asset operations and maintenance.

CAG Charter:

- The [CAG Charter](#) was established by WaterNSW and applies to all Customer Advisory Groups. The Charter explains the role of the CAG, CAG catchment areas, appointment and selection criteria, term, member role and responsibilities, process for vacancies during a term, operating procedures for meetings and role of Chairperson.
- Increasing meeting time spent on customer-nominated topics: based on customer feedback to improve the value of meetings, WaterNSW is proposing that each CAG Chairperson assist WaterNSW with setting valley-specific customer nominated agenda items for each CAG meeting. Members may suggest items for inclusion via the CAG contact or Chairperson, ensuring items are proposed in advance of meetings to ensure time and resources can be allocated. Noting topics nominated should be related to the services WaterNSW provides.

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- While outside the remit of the CAG, customers commented that the policy space is important and would appreciate if policy items could be included where relevant so customers are aware of policy decisions and what is happening in the water space. WaterNSW will continue to extend invitations to other agencies as required. The Regional Water Strategies team was invited to this meeting and declined, however DPE is attending today to speak to water allocations and NRAR will also be presenting.
- Members commented that having more input into meeting agendas and giving greater priority to customer concerns is a good step.

1.7 Election of Chairperson:

- Due to low numbers in attendance, the election of Chairperson is to be carried over to the next meeting. Lyn Davies was nominated as acting Chairperson for this meeting.

1.8 Minutes of Previous Meeting, 15 March 2022:

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on [15 March 2022](#) be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.

*M Drum
carried*

1.9 Actions arising from minutes

- See action sheet attached.

2. Assets:

2.1 Asset Maintenance update (B Mayhew)

- Asset performance and maintenance in the Macquarie valley presented and discussed, including routine preventative and corrective maintenance delivery at Windermere and Burrendong dams and Gunningbar Regulator.
- WaterNSW completed 483 preventative maintenance work orders and 97 corrective maintenance works orders from March to June 2022.

2.2 Capital Plan FY22-25 update (L Zaw)

- WaterNSW presented an update on projects in progress (Macquarie Maintain Capability Program (MCP) project and Burrendong Dam spillway radial gates drive upgrade), FY23-25 capital projects overview, upcoming projects (Burrendong Dam, Gunningbar Creek Regulator, Windamere Dam projects), Fishway program update (Marebone Break Regulator, Dubbo North Weir and Gin Gin Weir) and Burrendong CWP update.
- The Marebone Break Regulator Fishway (Pilot Fishway) project is in progress, with proposed construction to commence July 2023 and completed by July 2024. An options assessment for the Dubbo North Weir Fishway is in progress with proposed commencement in 2024. The Gin Gin Weir Fishway design is to be completed within the FY22-25 determination period and execution in the next determination period. All three fishways have been triggered as part of dam safety upgrade obligations.
- As presented at the last meeting, sliding plates multi-level offtake (MLO) is the preferred solution to cold water pollution (CWP) at Burrendong Dam. The project will incorporate applicable learnings from the CWP options study currently being undertaken at Blowering, Keepit and Copeton dams, which will be completed by June 2023. WaterNSW will progress design work in the current determination period and seek execution funding in the next determination period. The current curtain is not considered to be an ongoing option.

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2.3 Water System Operations update (A Prathab)

- WaterNSW presented an update on recent rainfall, climate outlook, operation and storage status at Burrendong and Windamere dams, water availability, water account summary at 30 June 2022, Burrendong airspace operation update, S&D replenishment, Drought Management Plan purpose and status, water quality and planned outages.
- Record inflows into Burrendong Dam occurred in November 2022. Burrendong Dam is currently sitting at 128% with 8GL inflows. Windamere is currently at 72%.
- Members raised concerns regarding flooding at Marebone with current inflows. The Flood Mitigation Zone (FMZ) Reference Panel will be consulted with considerations.
- Burrendong Dam is currently in Bay 3 of FMZ. The FMZ Reference Panel advice is to target a flow rate of 28GL/day at Gin Gin gauge to bring storage down to 110% as quickly as possible, estimated to be by 24 July 2022 (120% by 17 July). The FMZ Reference Panel will reconvene when the storage gets to 110%. FMZ operation has largely been based on the reference panel's advice including setting d/s flow and storage level targets.
- The draft Macquarie Drought Management Plan is in place. A short version is planned to be prepared and circulated to customers and stakeholders for review.
- Coating works of the gates has started at Marebone Weir and is expected to be completed by mid-August 2022.

2.4 Water Allocations and Outlook update (C Barclay - DPE)

- DPE provided an update on water allocations and outlook including an overview of the NSW Allocations Framework, opening allocations for the 2022/23 water year, compliance with long term extraction limits, account and spill rules, Water Sharing Plan (WSP) changes, weather outlook and updated water allocations statement
- General security licences and the Macquarie EWA have received 40% allocation. Stock and Domestic, local water utilities, high security and supplementary have received maximum 100% allocation.
- Carryover from 2021/22 water year in the Macquarie is estimated to be 92% (566GL), Cudgegong is estimated to be 227% (42GL) and EWA is 160GL. The carryover limit is 100% in both Macquarie and Cudgegong.
- A new WSP is expected to come into effect in 2022/23. The main change is the creation of a Cudgegong EWA to replace the current translucent flow rules. This means the PEW (planned environmental water) becomes callable rather than triggered by inflows. The new WSP will also include provisions and rules for floodplain harvesting. Water resource plans have now been submitted with PEW included.
- Members questioned if the 20GL for EWA will come out of flows for the Macquarie. Yes, there will still be likely flows to Burrendong with some runoff offsetting that.
- Members raised concerns about paying back translucent flows when not able to be delivered due to high flows and therefore they were not required, stating Macquarie users will be disadvantaged. DPE stated that translucent flows were suspended due to high flows throughout the catchment, and that access issues would be exacerbated in the Cudgegong if translucent flows were released. The volume that should have been released will be added to the residual account to become part of the Cudgegong EWA (10-11GL). Translucent flows are only triggered during high flows and we couldn't plan for them in the minimum inflow scenario we assume in the resource assessment, so now they can be planned for we will have to consider this in the resource assessment. M Drum will contact DPE out of session to discuss concerns.

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- An updated [water allocation statement](#) has been released today (12 July 2022) with the next statement due for release on 10 August.
- A bulk water transfer of 101GL won't be required until December 2022.

3. Presentations/Consultation:

3.1 Regulatory Economics update (J Dickson)

- WaterNSW is continuing discussions with IPART around the proposed engagement framework they have released from stakeholder workshops held in 2021. We are working with IPART to understand scope to enable pricing consultation/engagement to be planned with customers. The ongoing pricing conversation will include the input received as part of Customer Conversations completed late last year. An engagement plan will be developed over the coming months with a view to updating the next CAG meeting and starting engagement later this year.
- WaterNSW's Operating Licence has been renewed by IPART for two years. The Operating Licence directs the activities WaterNSW is required to complete. A more detailed review will commence early 2023 once water sector reform has been stabilised.

3.2 Water Reform Implementation Plan (WRIP)

Non-Urban Metering Reform update (S Lykos (DPE) / M Brooks)

- Regulations that enable the restriction, control and measurement of floodplain water came into effect on 1 July 2022 as part of the NSW Government's commitment to floodplain harvesting reform. Amendments to relevant WSPs that will complete regulation of floodplain harvesting in the Border Rivers and Gwydir valleys are currently before Ministers for consideration.
- More information on floodplain harvesting can be found at <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-programs/healthy-floodplains-project/measurement>
- WaterNSW reminded customers of requirements if they are past their rollout date and not yet fully compliant. The **key message** is that water users must show they have made reasonable effort to become compliant. NRAR is aware of supply issues however expects all water users to have taken tangible steps in an appropriate timeframe to demonstrate pathway to compliance (entered into a formal arrangement with a meter installer, can provide invoices/records of correspondence with a service provider).
- An overview of compliance numbers and key information for the Macquarie-Cudgegong presented and discussed.
- Before data at a site **moves from** the Data Acquisition Service (DAS) to the Water Accounting System (iWAS), WaterNSW conducts a quality control check on the data. There may be a number of reasons that **prevent data from moving** through the system, including incorrect configurations in the LID such as unit of measure or scaling factor, LID attached to incorrect meter or a delay in submission of validation certificate. WaterNSW is working with DQPs to prevent these issues and the gap between the two sites.
- WaterNSW has been conducting in-field testing in Moree of a Campbell "multi meter to one LID". Three meters are feeding data to the DAS through a single Campbell LID and is working as expected. Plans for release in August.
- Once compliant, there are **ongoing requirements** under the metering reforms including recording and reporting, faulty equipment (all components), ongoing maintenance and revalidation. **Recording and reporting requirements** for licensed water take and water take under BLR or licence exemption *with and without a meter* (with and without telemetry) presented and discussed. **For**

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more information and links to relevant forms, please visit the [recording and reporting](#) page on WaterNSW's website.

- Customers are reminded they must **report faulty metering equipment** within 24 hours by completing the online [S91i form](#), which will allow customers to continue to pump. Faulty equipment must be replaced/fixed within 21 days or a [request for an extension](#) must be submitted. Members commented that S91i forms are continually being rolled over/extended, which would suggest the policy is taking time to embed, and this should be considered in future rollouts.
- Members stated a number of water users with MACE meters are still having issues with accurate measurement and questioned if the revalidation date is being pushed out. Taken on notice.

Action MC2207.01: WaterNSW to confirm if the revalidation date for MACE meters has been extended.

Responsibility: M Brooks

- Members stated they have followed the rules and installed a meter by their rollout date but are now being told by their DQP they require a LID (meter is in an at-risk groundwater source). WaterNSW advised that a datalogger is the minimum requirement however customers may want to consider telemetry as a better option. Will discuss specifics with customer out of session and confirm with DQP.
- Members commented there is general frustration with emerging policy, how it was rolled out and the ability for water users to 'get things done' (issues with supply, meters, available DQPs etc) which will be particularly concerning when floodplain harvesting comes into play (what is required and when). WaterNSW stated there is more to come in the FPH space however is aware DPE is considering a third way of measurement.
- Additional documents to metering resources and other information can be found on WaterNSW's website at www.waternsw.com.au/metering.

3.3 NRAR Compliance update

NRAR's focus areas for the coming water year (A Howe - NRAR)

- NRAR provided an update on its regulatory priorities, enduring priorities, FY21-22 and FY22-23 annual priorities and an overview of its targeted campaign in the Hunter on irrigated agriculture. Good progress has been made across NSW on the metering regulations and NRAR will continue to work with water users to help them understand and comply with the rules.
- NRAR presented compliance figures for overdrawn accounts and bore extraction limits. Water accounts will be audited on a quarterly basis and overdrawn accounts will be flagged. Bores with extraction limits in at-risk groundwater sources will be audited every 6 months.
- Priorities for the year ahead are continued focus on state-wide water metering and DQPs, irrigated agriculture in the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Far North Coast and state-wide mining activities. The focus on the year ahead will be on the southern inland region.
- NRAR's compliance and enforcement attention is focussed on high volume water users with the expectation that all water users will have at least entered into a formal arrangement with a meter installer before their deadline or can show evidence of commencing an alternative pathway to compliance.

3.4 Hydrographic Network and Remote Sensing (HNRS) Program (D Berry – on behalf of DPE)

- The Australian Government has provided \$35M for a collaborative program of four projects to enhance the quality, availability and transparency of water monitoring and information for the Northern Murray-Darling Basin and consists of installation of 20 new, relocated or improved gauging stations. After commissioning, sites will be integrated into the WaterNSW monitoring network for routine operation and maintenance.

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- Project 1 is a state-based water and reporting information toolkit servicing the public, entitlement holders and state-based compliance officers; project 2 is a Commonwealth-led northern basin public water information portal and compliance officer portal; project 3 consists of improved cross-border measurement and monitoring; and project 4 is development of analytical methods and routines that support operationalised systems.
- To meet the project timelines, subject matter experts selected 5 priority sites for hydrometric gauging station installations to meet current and future needs of the Water Sharing Plans. Tranche 1 (Project 3) approved gauging station sites and site selection criteria presented and discussed.
- Stakeholders are encouraged to have their say and a stakeholder submission form will be available on the DPE website in late July. Submissions will be assessed against the selection criteria and a detailed assessment of selected sites will be conducted.

3.5 WAVE Pilot update (J Dickson)

- WaterNSW continues to renew our core systems to improve and streamline the way customers transact, providing choices for those who prefer digital/self-service while options will remain available for those who don't.
- An online customer portal will drive our transition to digital engagement and self-service, enabling customers to access our services at any time and from anywhere. Part of this vision is also to provide our customers with the opportunity to manage their water related needs all from one place.
- The pilot will soon be launched to test functionality before converting existing customers to the new process. For more information, please visit our [Customer Portal](#).
- Members commented that end of year accounts take a long time to go out, which causes issues for the schemes, and questioned if this could be done earlier. WaterNSW advised that when telemetry is rolled out this will improve (ie less requirement for staff to physically read a meter), however will take time.
- Members noted that bills for joint WALs are always in the name of the first person, which is an issue for auditors. WaterNSW stated this is a known issue and we are looking into this to see what can be done.

4. Business Papers:

- Noted and taken as read.

5. General Business:

Meeting Review and Close

Next Meeting: 30 November 2022

Meeting closed: 2.30pm

Macquarie-Cudgegong Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 12 July 2022

Carried forward actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
MC1705.03	WaterNSW to look at costing of re-routing channel at Bulgeraga Creek.	R Magaharan	<p>Action complete, works ongoing.</p> <p>July 2022 update:</p> <p>Funding for Bulgeraga channel works has been confirmed from the Macquarie Renewals and Replacement capex budget provision. The work has been delayed due to the channels in the area operating at full capacity (including Bulgeraga), coupled with an extensive wet period.</p> <p>Funding and environmental approvals are in place and a contractor is ready to proceed with the works as soon as conditions align.</p> <p>The proposal is to replace the windy tree-filled section with capacity that matches the d/s channel. Not looking to reduce capacity.</p>
MC1809.04	WaterNSW to advise if there are any long-term plans to address issues at Gin Gin weir which affect customers in low flow conditions.	R Magaharan	<p>Action complete, works ongoing.</p> <p>There are plans in place to block the lower scour valve when water levels permit. This should keep the weir pool at a higher level during periods of low flows.</p> <p>July 2022 update:</p> <p>There is no change since the previous update, with water still over the crest. For works to safely commence, the water needs to drop below crest level.</p> <p>The future of the weir will form part of the Macquarie-Wambuul Water Security Project (formerly Macquarie-Re-Regulating Storage Project) https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water-infrastructure-nsw/regional-projects/macquarie-wambuul-water-security-project</p>

New actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
MC2207.01	WaterNSW to confirm if the revalidation date for MACE meters has been extended.	M Brooks	

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