

Coastal-Hunter Customer Advisory Group - Minutes of Meeting



Location: WaterNSW, Level 9, 420 George St, SYDNEY

Date: 5 March 2019

Time: 10.00am

Present: Chris Magner (Chair), Justen Simpson, Stephen Osborn, Steve Guthrey, Axel Hanson, Chris Rooney, David Cliff, David Williams, Shane Gee, John Watson, Ken Bray (observer), Wayne Clarke, Michelle Cavallaro (observer), David Stockler, Jonathan Dickson, Dan Berry, Martin Prendergast, Anthony Cooper and Toni Hayes (minutes).

Michael Barratt attended for agenda items 2.3 & 2.4.

Ron Walker (Skype) attended for agenda item 3.1.

Meeting Opened: 10.00am.

1. Welcome and introductions:

1.1 Confirmation of Agenda Items

- Additional agenda items tabled at General Business.

1.2 Apologies

- Julia Wokes.

1.3 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.

1.4 Minutes of Previous Meeting, 5 September 2018

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on 5 September 2018 be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.

*C Rooney/D Cliff
carried*

1.5 Actions arising from minutes

- See action sheet attached.

2. Water Delivery:

2.1 Water System Operations Reports (M Prendergast)

- WaterNSW presented the operations plans for the Bega/Brogo, Toonumbar, Paterson and Hunter valleys, including water availability, resource assessment distribution, inflows, operational surplus and storage forecast. The plans are publicly available on WaterNSW's website at waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations.
- Trading discussed. Customers commented that the high costs involved in placing a trade is a barrier to trading water.
- Concerns raised regarding an irrigator extracting high flows in low flow conditions. Customers advised that he has self-reported to NRAR however believe he shouldn't have been granted a high flow licence in the first instance. Licence conditions vs WSP discussed. WaterNSW

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at waternsw.com.au

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

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at oursay.org/waternsw

waternsw.com.au

advised that if there is a suspected/alleged breach, customers should lodge an Alleged Breach Notice (ABN) with NRAR. Individual daily extraction limits are currently in reform discussions.

2.2 Operational Drought Update (D Berry)

- Extreme event policy principles, extreme events stages and hierarchy of water priorities presented.
- Water sources drought status update presented for NSW water sources. Northern valleys are operating under drought stages 2-4 (emerging drought to critical drought), with southern valleys operating under stage 1, normal operations.
- Critical Water Advisory Panels (CWAP) have been established in the northern inland regulated river valleys and the Barwon-Darling/Lower Darling to advise on appropriate management actions in extreme events. Will commence in southern valleys in due course. Customers queried whether CWAPs will be established for the Hunter unregulated system. WaterNSW will take back to DoIW.
- WaterNSW is proposing to form consultation groups with local panels of customer representatives and additional stakeholders in each affected area.
- Customers noted that SAP and WRP issues are not working on the coast. There is a need for similar advisory groups to CAGs to be set up for DoIW issues.
- **Current situation:** Gwydir, Namoi and Macquarie-Cudgegong system inflows and water allocations graphs presented and discussed, and explanation of carryover provided.
- **Situation at Menindee:** presented and discussed Barwon-Darling flows vs extraction graphs; water losses July 2016-January 2019; northern valley storages vs Menindee Lakes graphs (is filling in the same pattern as the northern storages); Darling River flows and Menindee Lakes storage operations and volumes.
- **Why are we in this situation:** NSW rainfall and temperature graphs and comparison of drought inflows (Burrendong, Copeton, Keepit and Split Rock dams) presented and discussed.
- Further information is available on WaterNSW's website at waternsw.com.au/supply/drought-information

2.3 Water Insight Portal (M Barratt)

- Preparation is underway of a valley by valley website which will be a single, interactive dashboard for customers to use to aid on-farm decisions, including storage, water quality, allocation, distribution, inter-valley trade, tributary flow, rainfall, news/updates. Expected to be available by end of June 2019.
- Customers provided the following suggestions for inclusion: environmental watering events hyperlink to OEH site; control points in unregulated systems (heights), weir and river levels; SES river height gauges for sharing information.
- Feedback and suggestions can be provided to Toni.Hayes@waternsw.com.au.

2.4 Operational Loss Update (M Barratt)

- During the last round of CAGs, customers requested WaterNSW present a breakdown of operational and system losses in Operations Plans going forward.
- A project has commenced to investigate this, however the detail required by valley is significant and complex. This will be a longer-term project.
- Overview of project and progress provided. Updates will be provided to the CAG as the project develops.

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at waternsw.com.au

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

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at oursay.org/waternsw

2.5 Drought Response (J Dickson)

- Critical Water Advisory Panels (CWAP) have commenced in the north, with the south to follow in March.
- WaterNSW has heightened its communications to customers on the drought, including publishing valley-specific information on drought; weekly commentary on greatest impacted valleys and critical issues commentary. We have also increased engagement with other water agencies.
- Customers can subscribe to weekly updates at waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/subscribe.
- **Coming soon:** WSP/WRP changes mid-term – WaterNSW is in discussions with DoIW to establish a forum for stakeholder input on proposed changes/effects to the WRP mid-term. Potentially will be an agenda item at CAGs going forward to discuss, understand and suggest changes as they arise.

3. Assets

3.1 Asset Maintenance and Services Update (R Walker)

- Asset performance and maintenance for Hunter and Coastal valleys presented and discussed, including safety improvements, asset performance, maintenance delivery 2018/19, breakdown/defects and other items of note.
- Customers highlighted issues with silting at Shannonbrook Weir. WaterNSW confirmed it is on the plan with 55 other weirs to seek prioritisation and funding. WaterNSW will investigate out of session, taken as question on notice.

Action CVH1903.01: WaterNSW to investigate issues raised in relation to Shannonbrook Weir and advise Coastal-Hunter CAG.

Responsibility: R Walker

4. Presentations/Consultation

4.1 Compliance (J Dickson)

- At the request of members during the last CAG round, the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) will meet with CAG members immediately after the CAG meeting to discuss with NRAR its strategic priorities and direction.

4.2 NSW Government Fixed Fee Rebate Update (J Dickson)

- A total of 34,114 customers have received rebates to date as well as customers of eight irrigation corporations.
- For **regulated** customers, the rebate will be applied equally over four bills, commencing Q4 of the last water year.
- For **unregulated** and **groundwater** customers, the rebate will be applied to the next bill (covering 2017/18 charges).
- High Security and Government Agencies are excluded from the rebate.
- Go to dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/droughthub for more information.

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at waternsw.com.au

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

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at oursay.org/waternsw

4.3 Regulatory Update (J Dickson)

Reform Update

- WaterNSW provided an update on water reform, including work in progress on metering and telemetry, Duly Qualified Person (DQP) framework and inactive works. It is intended that by 1 April 2019, all elements will be in place to allow customers to understand if and how meter regulations will apply to them.
- **Metering:** the Task Force and MDBA have released a list of current pattern approved (and potential pattern approved) meters mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/pubs/pattern-approved-non-urban-water-meters.pdf
- **Telemetry:** single framework to be owned by DoIW, equipment to be owned by individuals; cloud-based solution; intent for customers to have access to the data; Data Acquisition Service (DAS) tender underway; intent that all water agencies will access the data.
- **Still to come:** Reasonable Use Guidelines, meter ownership discussion, reporting on non-telemetered meters, DoIW/Task Force engagement.
- Customers noted that some farm dams are not included in the WRAP. The need for telemetry makes the whole system uneconomical.

IPART Cost Share Review

- IPART issued its final report in February 2019. There was no substantial change from the October 2018 draft.
- Following the impactor pays framework. Any increase in Rural and WAMC charges will be worked through the coming Determinations.

4.4 Regulatory Economics – Pricing Determination Engagement Plans (J Dickson)

WAMC Determination

- The current WAMC determination runs 2016-2020, with functions split between DoIW, NRAR and WaterNSW. On the current timetable, new pricing submissions are due by 30 June 2019 by each agency.
- WRAP recommendations delayed separation of duties and responsibilities, however outline of division of duties between agencies has now been agreed.
- Formal engagement on pricing options is planned for May 2019 and WaterNSW proposes to engage with customers in each valley throughout May.

Rural Valleys Determination

- The Rural Valleys Determination runs from 2017-2021, with submissions due to IPART 30 June 2020.
- WaterNSW will be seeking customer involvement in price modelling in early 2019. Engagement will follow the CAG format, with additions as required.

4.5 iWAS Update (J Dickson)

iWAS Improvements

- Coming soon: apportioning usage by Licence/Works; easier access to iWAS information for customers; carryover forecast by account; amending water orders within lead times.

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at waternsw.com.au

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

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at oursay.org/waternsw

Carryover Campaign

- WaterNSW's carryover campaign was a huge success last year with strong customer feedback on saving them on forfeiture. WaterNSW will run the campaign again this year, with new functionality in iWAS showing potential carryover.

Ordering water – amending orders within lead time

- An issue was identified with iWAS only allowing users to order, amend or cancel a water order during business hours. There is an opportunity within iWAS to enable users to amend orders out of hours **within lead time** window to ensure water take has a compliant order. This will be trialled in the Lachlan valley and if successful will be rolled out to all valleys.

4.6 Your WaterNSW Bill (J Dickson)

- In response to customer feedback, WaterNSW has updated the look and feel of our invoices. We have sought to make understanding your invoices easier and summarised charges on one page, as well as including a breakdown of charges into a simple structure.
- **New on our website:** you can now access Algal Alerts, operational update notices and supplementary notices from our website homepage. Customers can register to receive specific alerts at waternsw.com.au/supply/regional-nsw/alerts-and-updates

4.7 CAG Term of Office (J Dickson)

- The current term of office for all CAGs expires on 30 June 2019. WaterNSW is calling for nominations for the 2019-22 term during February and March 2019.
- If you wish to continue your representation on the CAG, please liaise with your nominating organisation to register your interest. Nominations close 29 March 2019 and a nomination form has been sent to your nominating organisation.

5. Business Papers:

- Noted and taken as read.

6. General Business

6.1 Lostock to Glennies Creek Pipeline

- Customers requested an update on the proposed Lostock to Glennies Creek pipeline - where the feasibility study is up to, how water is to be used if goes ahead and if costs will be passed on to water users.

Action CVH1903.02: WaterNSW to provide an update on the proposed Lostock to Glennies Creek pipeline to the Coastal-Hunter CAG.

Responsibility: A Fraser

6.2 Harvestable Rights Dams

- Customers questioned licence conditions on harvestable rights dam and whether legal/illegal. Specific customer issue to be addressed out of session.

Action CVH1903.03: Provide licence number and details to WaterNSW (Toni Hayes) to investigate clarification on harvestable rights dams.

Responsibility: D Cliff

Meeting Review and Close

Next Meeting : Tuesday 9 July 2019

Meeting closed: 2.10pm

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at waternsw.com.au

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

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at oursay.org/waternsw

Coastal-Hunter Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 5 March 2019

Carried forward actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
CVH1809.01	WaterNSW to confirm flow at Angledale station gauge.	M Prendergast	Complete. Confirmed that 5-9ML/day passing at Angledale station.
CVH1809.02	WaterNSW to confirm if divesting Nimmie-Caira assets back to DOI Water will have any impact on Lowbidgee fees.	M Clayton	Complete. WaterNSW expects that there will be no negative bill impact arising from the transactions to Lowbidgee customers and could deliver customer bill reduction/efficiency, however such efficiency is sensitive to the value of the operating expenditures including overhead allocations, capex plan, and other regulatory inputs. WaterNSW will quantify any such efficiency savings for the next price submission for consideration by the pricing regulator.
CVH1809.03	WaterNSW to provide information on any Coastal-Hunter sites currently identified in the fish passage strategy.	M Clayton	Complete. WaterNSW's fish barrier sites identified for Coastal-Hunter in the fish passage strategy are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cookes Weir (Richmond River) - Liddell Gauging Station (Hunter River) - Tallowa Dam (Shoalhaven River)
CVH1811.01	Follow up customer concerns in relation to pumping threshold control points that are not telemetered.	M Prendergast	In progress. Customers noted the need for control points to be telemetered. Concerns around liability/proof that control point reaches right conditions. Currently voluntary arrangements are in place in the Bega system, however concerns around litigation. In the WSP review, WUAs will argue that they don't want to be responsible for running the system anymore. WaterNSW will take to Metering Standards group.

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at waternsw.com.au

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

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at oursay.org/waternsw

CVH1811.02	WaterNSW to provide more information on proposed water ordering in the unregulated system at the next meeting.	M Prendergast	Complete. This was discussed in the context of active management that may be something the Department looks at in the future. Comes back to the WSP and whether water is required to be ordered.
-------------------	--	---------------	--

New actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
CVH1903.01	WaterNSW to investigate issues raised in relation to Shannonbrook Weir and advise Coastal-Hunter CAG.	R Walker	
CVH1903.02	WaterNSW to provide an update on the proposed Lostock to Glennies Creek pipeline to the Coastal-Hunter CAG.	A Fraser	
CVH1903.03	Provide licence number and details to WaterNSW (Toni Hayes) to investigate clarification on harvestable rights dams.	D Cliff	

Contact us

Call us on **1300 662 077**

Visit us at waternsw.com.au

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

Provide feedback on "Your Voice" at oursay.org/waternsw