

**Murray-Lower Darling
Customer Advisory Group
Minutes of Meeting
Wednesday 23 August 2017
Quest on Townsend, Townsend Street, Albury**

Present: Hilary Johnson, Henk Van De Ven, Katharine McBride, Rachel Strachan, Luke Barlow, Anthony Couroupis, Gordon Fox, Greg Jolley, Sally Dye, David May, Emma Wilson, Louise Burge (10.20am), Ian Mason (10.40am), David Stockler, Jonathan Dickson, Vincent Kelly, Sonia Townsend (minutes).

Meeting Opened: 10.00am.

1. Welcome and Introductions

- J Dickson welcomed members. Each member provided a brief introduction.

2. Apologies: Hilton Taylor, Brad Ferris, Paul Childs, John Lolicato.

– Confirmation of Agenda Items & Declaration of Interest(s)

- Declarations of interest sought from attendees. No interests were declared.

4. Carried Forward Actions arising from CSC minutes June 2017

- See attached action sheet.
- Customers requested previous request for DPI Water attendance at a future CAG be facilitated by WNSW.
- WNSW advised:
 - A number of the issues contained in the DPI request are being addressed in today's agenda.
 - WNSW reiterated the standing offer made to DPI, for them to conduct a separate consultation session after the WNSW CAG meeting utilising the same facilities.
 - WNSW take issues to DPI regularly as part of the WNSW/DPI monthly and bi-monthly meetings. WNSW note common themes and concerns from CAGs across the state, and use the monthly meetings as a mechanism to channel those issues back to DPI.
 - It was noted that DPI issues are outside the scope of the Charter of the CAG. WNSW are not able to control responses from DPI and can only address issues relating to WNSW business.
- Customers requested WNSW provide regular out of session updates on issues of relevance which are discussed in the WNSW/DPI meetings.
- Customers strongly reiterated the importance of the CAG keeping informed and involved in issues relating to DPI Water which have an impact on their water availability and their businesses.
- WNSW acknowledge the frustrations of customers and will continue to champion the concerns of customers with the regulator. WNSW will take copies of any correspondence sent to DPI (and shared with us), to WNSW/DPI meetings for follow-up, should customers choose to provide a copy to WNSW.

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- Customers expressed concern that the Lower Murray Darling Groundwater Resource Plan submissions closed on 7 August, however customers were unaware the submission period was open. DPI have now re-opened submissions.

5. CAG Member Introduction/Information

5.1 CAG Roles & Responsibilities

- Presentation by J Dickson (copy attached).
- Copy of WaterNSW brochure “NSW’s bulk water supplier, river operator and your one stop shop for licensing, water trades and water information” provided to members.
- WNSW will meet with CAGs face to face a minimum of six monthly. Schedule of first round of meetings for 2018 provided.

5.2 CAG Member Documentation/Claims

- WNSW moving to electronic methods for documentation and claims. Link sent to all members seeking completion of personal and banking details in July 2017.
- After each meeting members will receive an email requesting feedback, and an opportunity to submit a claim.

6. Elections

6.1 Election of Chair

- Nominations for the position of Chair were called.
- Sally Dye nominated by R Strachan/L Burge.
- As no further nominations received, Sally Dye was appointed to the position of Chair.

6.2 Election of CAG Advisory Group Representative

- Sally Dye accepted appointment to the position of CAG Representative.

7. Water Delivery

7.1 Water System Operations Report

- V Kelly presented water system operations report – <http://www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations>

Action MLD1708.01: *Note to be included on future Storage graphs in Water Operations Report, advising date of data (e.g. “to end July”).*

Responsibility: V Kelly

- Discussion on storage graphs not identifying what proportion of volume of storage is inaccessible.
- WNSW currently working internally on storage reporting including detail on available volumes in storage, and will consider feedback on storage volume reporting for Menindee Lakes as part of this work.
- Discussion on DPI Water allocation announcements and carryover volumes being clearly defined. Noted that general security has been broken down in a pie chart in the most recent allocation announcement.

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- Water Availability for NSW Murray – sum of AWD less usage does not balance - error in report.
- Discussion on recent sale of a large volume of water in the Lower Darling, with customers questioning whether the facility for that customer to continue to carryover in the Menindee Lakes (equivalent to their on farm storage) will continue. WNSW suggest customers write directly to the regulator on this issue, with WNSW happy to then follow up if required.

Action MLD1708.02: *Customers to direct request for response to the regulator (DPI) on the following: Post the recent sale of a large volume of water in the Lower Darling, will the facility to carryover in the Menindee Lakes (equivalent to their on farm storage) continue for that customer? Correspondence to be c.c'd to WNSW.*

Responsibility: R Strachan

Action: MLD1708.03: *Note to be included on the rainfall and inflow graph (Dartmouth dam) showing sources of inflow.*

Responsibility: V Kelly

Linked/Tagged Licences – Review

- Discussion on previously-presented information on linked/tagged licences.
- Customers keen to receive the same information from WNSW in regard to questions posed by the Murrumbidgee CAG
- Discussion on linked/tagged licence customers holding Victorian allocation and the possibility of them transferring water to Victoria (i.e. freeing up opportunities for trade).

Action MLD1708.04: *WNSW to provide answers to the following re linked/tagged licences, for further discussion/review at the March 2018 meeting:*

- *What was initial intent of the linked/tagged rules?*
- *Are there any unintended consequences of these rules?*
- *Are the tagged/linked licences being utilised in the manner originally intended? (And if not, are there any advantages to a small number of account holders)?*
- *If these licence holders receive an advantage, is this deemed to be unfair advantage? (And if so, should action be taken, and what action would that be)?*
- *If proven that linked licences are providing licence holders with an unfair advantage, is there any opportunity for customers to pursue a possible change to these licences?*

Responsibility: V Kelly

Action MLD1708.05: *WNSW to endeavour to provide End of System information as part of future Murray-Lower Darling Water Operations reports.*

Responsibility: V Kelly

- Discussion on Hume airspace operations and concerns by customers impacted by recent flooding. WNSW noted that any adjustment to airspace rules will impact water availability for all water users in the valley. Customers noted anxiety amongst some customers re operating rules, and suggested stakeholders would like to be involved in future discussions on airspace. Discussions reflected flooding risk was not about adjustment to, or operation of the rules, but more over support for “active utilisation” of the existing rules.

Action MLD1708.06: *WNSW to confirm advice on stakeholder involvement in MDBA review process for airspace and capacity issues.*

Responsibility: V Kelly

8. System Operation and Asset Services

8.1 Asset Maintenance and Services Update

- R Magaharan provided the Asset Maintenance and Services Update by Skype (copy attached).
- Discussion on improvements to the Early Warning Network (EWN). Customers may opt in for the alert service. WNSW are working to replace this system with an updated communication system.

9. Presentations/Consultation

9.1 Regulatory Reform

Presentation by D Stockler.

Water Resource Plans (WRPs)

- DPI Water own the WRP process, with WNSW as a stakeholders (alongside customers) in that process. WNSW provided their own submission to DPI on the WRPs.
- At several previous Customer Service Committee meetings, customers agreed to share their submissions with other valley customers.
- WNSW advised that DPI confirmed Pre-requisite Policy Measures will be discussed as part of the WRP process.
- Timeline of key dates for the WRP process is available on the DPI website.
- Customers expressed frustration regarding minutes from SAP meetings not being distributed, meeting scheduled to occur by end July not held and documentation distributed by DPI which had obvious omissions (no mention of any issues in the Lower Darling).
- A point of order was called by WNSW regarding time and scope of content of meeting.

9.2 Voice of Customer Framework

- J Dickson provided update (copy attached)
- WNSW uses Twitter as one of our communication platforms to keep customers informed, and encourage customers to follow WNSW.
- WNSW launching their online community – connection to a digital network of WNSW customers. CAG members invited to join this information sharing and gathering network, and will be automatically registered upon completion of post-meeting survey.
- As one example of the survey data collected and overview of end-of-call survey results were shared (July 2017).

9.3 Customer Communications

Customer Service Charter

- Revised Customer Charter to reflect the additional responsibilities WNSW has taken over from the Regulator
 - Customer Contact
 - Licencing Regulation and Dealings
 - Water Delivery, Ordering and reporting
 - Information and Communication

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Consolidated Information Management System (CIMS) Update

- WNSW upgrading telephony platform to enable customers to make contact through multiple avenues (e.g. phone, IM, SMS etc). Currently assessing options, with expected implementation early 2018.

9.4 Snowy License Review

- Ben Lathwell joined the meeting by Skype to prove the Snowy License Review (copy attached).
- DPI Water has commenced the mandatory 10 year review of the Snowy Water License. Submissions due 28 August 2017.
- As system operator, WNSW believe it important to consider if opportunity exists to improve the license:
 - Water security outcomes (with neutral or beneficial impact) on energy security in particular relaxation arrangements
 - Flood mitigation for the Tumut and Murrumbidgee Rivers and the River Murray.
- WNSW interested in understanding customers' views in making a submission.
- Due to time constraints, responses on the issue to be provided out of session to WNSW prior to COB Friday 25 August.

Action MLD1708.07: *Additional information on the Snowy Licence Review to be provided to CAG members, with responses to be forwarded to Sonia by COB 25 August 2017.*

Responsible: B Lathwell

9.5 Levels of Service (LOS)

Presentation by L Castro.

- WNSW undertaking the LOS project over the coming 21 months to develop customer supported long-term infrastructure plans.
- Outline of some of the issues identified which affect customer LOS presented.
- Current stage of consultation process: existing LOS quantified per valley. Early 2018 customer consultations on long term issues and desired levels of service will commence. March 2019 customer-focussed long term strategy.
- Feedback sought from customers on how they wish to engage with WNSW on LOS during the period of consultation.
- Customers suggested that as part of Security of Supply and Reliability of Supply, "development" be included as one of the issues.
- Customers agreed face to face consultation preferable, possibly as session after CAG meeting. Discussion on possibly combining a LOS session with a valley infrastructure site visit, with the meeting held the following day.
- WNSW to return with a suggestion to the CAG regarding an opportunity in this regard which will include the LOS consultation.

9.6 Commonwealth Funded Asset Programs

Presentation by L Castro

- National Water Infrastructure Development Fund applications currently open.
- WNSW submitted some applications in 2016 for a number of studies, with \$1.4M obtained for two feasibility studies in the Border Rivers and Peel Valley. WNSW currently preparing three submissions for capital funding, predominantly in the Border Peel and Lachlan valleys. If any future funding opportunities are made available, customers will be kept informed.

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9.7 Local Water Utility (LWU) Review

G Begg joined the meeting by Skype to provide the LWU Review (copy attached).

- LWU review is a WNSW Operating Licence obligation, due by December 2018.
- Currently developing project plan which will be shared with LWUs and the CAGs over the coming 18 months.
- WNSW keen for members to be informed regarding investigations regarding increased monitoring. No specific action required at this point from the CAG, however the group will be kept informed and provided with a draft report in 2018.
- Discussion on water quality as a LOS and customer input into the issue.

Action MLD1708.08: *Detail on the "Securing Safe Drinking Water for Rural and Regional Communities" project to be provided to G Begg (to Sonia in the first instance).*

Responsibility: K McBride

9. Reports

- Noted and taken as read.
 - Operating Statements
 - Capital Expenditure Statements
 - Key Projects Updates

10. General Business

10.1 Intra-Valley Trade Closure

- Discussion on opening and closure of intra-valley trade in June. WNSW to confirm by what channel the trade opening was communicated.

Action MLD1708.09: *WNSW to confirm by what method the intra-valley trade opening was communicated in June.*

Responsibility: D Stockler/R Cocks

- The Water Sharing Plan clearly defines trade closure. No formal arrangement in place re communication channels from the regulator to the operator.
- Customers concerned with communication channels broadly between the Regulator and the Operator, seeking an opportunity to address this issue. WNSW acknowledge the issues, and are engaging with the Regulator in this regard, whilst also actively pursuing improvement to WNSW's own communication with its customers.

10.2 Water Regulation Review

- DPI Water have called for public comment re water management general regulation. Fact sheet covers what is trying to be achieved and specific clauses for which advocating change (http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/731075/factsheet-draft-water-management-gen-reg-2017.pdf)
- WNSW encourage customers submit their concerns directly to DPI Water.

10.3 Metering

- WNSW await finalisation of the water take policy. WNSW do not have a position on meter ownership, and are not advocating for any changes to ownership to meters.

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- Customers expressed the following:
 - frustration that the requirement for meters in the Murray-Lower Darling was believed by customers to be mandatory at the time. (Noted that the obligation for a meter hinges on the WSP and individual licence conditions).
 - dissatisfaction with rising metering costs – frustration that customers are paying for a telemetry system which is not providing any real benefits.
 - frustration with DPI's shortcomings with regard to finalising metering policy.
 - Belief that WNSW need to adapt their physical on-ground meter reading approach – more presence.
 - CFO's on-ground presence is invaluable in working to ensure customers are operating within the conditions of their licence, and they are a critical part of WNSW business.
 - Concern that other valleys are not as highly regulated/enforced as the Murray Valley.
- Fact sheets on each valley Water Sharing Plan are available on the DPI website, which customers are encouraged to read.
- WNSW reminded customers that the rules are determined by DPI as the Regulator. WNSW actively now manage compliance as of 1 July 2016, in accordance with the rules determined by the DPI.
- Discussion on infringement penalties, which are dependent upon severity of the case. WNSW are actively reviewing the inherited DPI Compliance Policy and will shortly publish our compliance framework on the WNSW website. Customers reminded that each individual case is different depending on evidence, severity etc.
- A point of order was called by WNSW regarding time and scope of content of meeting.

10.4 Location and Frequency of Meetings

- Customers feel that due to valley complexities, two face to face meetings per year are not ideal for the Murray-Lower Darling CAG – would prefer 3-4. An opportunity to conduct meetings in various locations in the valley to provide an educational opportunity would be welcomed.
- WNSW will take on board feedback, complete the current round of CAG meetings (8 meetings still left to conduct around the State) and will then set a work plan to determine consultation time frames.
- Discussion on broader use of technology to keep communication open between face to face meetings.

10.5 Measurement of Environmental Deliveries

- Discussion on measurement of environmental deliveries, with V Kelly providing a brief explanation of measurement of overbank flows.
- Ongoing process of improvement in accuracy of measurement of deliveries.

11. Meeting Review and Close

Meeting closed: 3.30pm

Murray-Lower Darling Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 23 August 2017

CURRENT ACTIONS			
Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
MLD1708.01	Note to be included on future Storage graphs in Water Operations Report, advising date of data (e.g. “to end July”).	V Kelly	
MLD1708.02	Customers to direct request for response to the regulator (DPI) on the following: Post the recent sale of a large volume of water in the Lower Darling, will the facility to carryover in the Menindee Lakes (equivalent to their on farm storage) continue for that customer? Correspondence to be c.c'd to WNSW.	R Strachan	
MLD1708.03	Note to be included on the rainfall and inflow graph (Dartmouth dam) showing sources of inflow.	V Kelly	
MLD1708.04	WNSW to provide answers to the following re linked/tagged licences, for further discussion/review at the March 2018 meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What was initial intent of the linked/tagged rules? – Are there any unintended consequences of these rules? – Are the tagged/linked licences being utilised in the manner originally intended? (And if not, are there any advantages to a small number of account holders)? – If these licence holders receive an advantage, is this deemed to be unfair advantage? (And if so, should action be taken, and what action would that be)? – If proven that linked licences are providing licence holders with an unfair advantage, is there any opportunity for customers to pursue a possible change to these licences? 	V Kelly	
MLD1708.05	WNSW to endeavour to provide End of System information as part of future Murray-Lower Darling Water Operations reports.	V Kelly	
MLD1708.06	WNSW to confirm advice on stakeholder involvement in MDBA review process for airspace and capacity issues.	V Kelly	
MLD1708.07	Additional information on the Snowy Licence Review to be provided to CAG members, with responses to be forwarded to Sonia by COB 25 August 2017.	B Lathwell	COMPLETE.

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MLD1708.08	Detail on the “Securing Safe Drinking Water for Rural and Regional Communities” project to be provided to G Begg (to Sonia in the first instance).	K McBride	COMPLETE.
MLD1708.09	WNSW to confirm by what method the Murray intra-valley trade opening was communicated in June.	D Stockler/R Cocks	