

Greater Sydney Customer Advisory Group - Minutes of Meeting



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

Date: 4 March 2019

Time: 10.00am

Present: Peter Gray (Chair), Chris Schumacher, Marina Hollands, Daniel Buckens, Michelle Cavallaro (OEH), Paul Rasmussen (from 11.30am), David Stockler, Jonathan Dickson, Ben Shallis, Enrico Proietti, Aurelie Rimbaut (Skype) and Toni Hayes (minutes).

Michael Barratt attended for agenda items 2.3 & 2.4.

Ronan Magaharan and Steve Hamson (Skype) attended for agenda item 3.1.

Meeting Opened: 10.10am.

1. Welcome and introductions:

1.1 Confirmation of Agenda Items

- Nil additional items tabled.

1.2 Apologies

- Justen Simpson, Robert Horner.

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.
- P Gray declared that Energy Australia has been working with WaterNSW in relation to seepage at Mt Piper, specifically on bore hole 10. He declared he has not been involved in these discussions and has no knowledge of work being done.

1.4 Minutes of Previous Meeting, 6 September 2018

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on 6 September 2018 be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.

*C Schumacher/B Shallis
carried*

1.5 Actions arising from minutes

- See action sheet attached.

2. Water Delivery:

2.1 Water System Operations Report (B Shallis)

- WaterNSW presented the operations plan for the Greater Sydney, including water availability, resource assessment distribution, inflows, operational surplus and storage forecast. The plan is publicly available on WaterNSW's website at waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/operations.
- The 60% total storage level was reached on 27 January 2019, which is a trigger under the Metropolitan Water Plan to initiate the restart of the Sydney Desalination Plant. The plant is expected to begin producing water within three or four months, although it may take up to

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eight months for it to reach its maximum capacity of 250ML/D. This desalinated water enters directly into Sydney's drinking water system, which is administered by Sydney Water Corporation. Discussed.

2.2 Operational Drought Update (J Dickson)

- 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). Southern valleys are 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 March.
- WaterNSW is proposing to form consultation groups with local panels of customer representatives and additional stakeholders in each affected area.
- **Current situation:** Gwydir, Namoi and Macquarie-Cudgegong system inflows and water allocations graphs presented and discussed.
- **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; 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).
- 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.
- Discussed how this might look for Greater Sydney and Fish River catchments. Customers provided the following suggestions for inclusion: same as for rural but would need to include western and southern information or information on each system; water quality; email alerts when changes to releases or indicators/targets; availability of assets; dam storages.
- 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 achieve this, however the detail required by valley is significant and complex, so this will be a long-term project. Updates will be provided to the CAG as the project progresses.

2.5 Drought Response (J Dickson)

- Critical Water Advisory Panels (CWAP) have commenced in the north, with the south to follow in March.

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- 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.

3. Assets

3.1 Asset Maintenance and Services Update (R Magaharan)

- Asset performance and maintenance for Greater Sydney and Fish River presented and discussed, including safety improvements, asset performance, maintenance delivery 2018/19, breakdowns/defects, upcoming works and other items of note.
- The water management licence states that when Oberon Dam reaches 40% capacity (as it has now), then WaterNSW should endeavour to utilise flow at Duckmaloi Weir to supplement stage 2 supply to Energy Australia and the Blue Mountains system. As a result of the continuing drought, there has been minimal flow recorded at Duckmaloi weir. As of 13 March, flow remains below the environmental flow threshold. In the past, there has been water quality issues using water from Duckmaloi Weir, especially due to local runoff from storm activity. WaterNSW is working with Sydney Water and Energy Australia to ensure systems are ready to facilitate use of water from Duckmaloi Weir should flows increase with the intention to bring the weir online this autumn. Additional water quality monitoring is being arranged at Rydal Dam for Energy Australia and the Fish River Pipeline at Leura for Sydney Water to aid in managing risks associated with utilising a run of river water source.
- Customers stated they would like to see more detail on future drought triggers presented in the operations plans. WaterNSW advised that this information would more appropriately be discussed at the operations meetings as the timeframe under drought triggers would be too long between CAG meetings. Resolved that updates from the operations meetings will be provided to the CAG at each meeting.

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 how NRAR is putting boots on the ground, its strategic priorities and more.
- Customers questioned what involvement NRAR has in relation to licensing water utilities. WaterNSW advised that it is not clean cut by customer type, will depend on transaction/function type. Is more complex than it was in the past in relation to water utilities.

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.

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- Go to dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/droughthub for more information.

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), inactive works. It is intended that by 1 April 2019, all elements will be in place to allow customers to understand if meter regulations will apply to them.
- 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 (initial scoping work started), meter ownership discussion (ongoing, final structure pending), reporting on non-telemetered meters (initial discussions underway), advertising obligations (engagement plan being considered).

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 (ownership of activities, IT infrastructure, process improvement etc).
- Formal engagement on pricing options will be ready 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.

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Carryover Campaign

- The 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 orders are compliant. 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.

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

- Nil.

Meeting Review and Close

Next Meeting : Wednesday 10 July 2019

Meeting closed: 12.00pm

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Greater Sydney Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 4 March 2019

Carried forward actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
GS1809.02	Follow up formal correspondence from Lithgow City Council to WaterNSW requesting access to additional points along the network to allow water carters to fill at other points.	D Buckens	Complete.

New actions

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Status
	Nil new actions.		

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