

# Greater Sydney Customer Advisory Group

## Minutes of Meeting

**Location:** Warragamba Dam  
**Date:** 27 March 2025  
**Time:** 10.30am

**Present:** Matt Trapp (Chair), Peter Griffiths, Brendan Logue, Gary Wallace, Anthony Muscat, Jenny Zadro, Paul Saad (observer), Molly Walker (observer, online) and Joshua Muscat (observer).

**WaterNSW:** Brendan Maher, Ramen Charan, Brian Mayhew, Rita Buttenshaw, Yarraan Doyle (online), Shelby Tiffin (online) and Toni Hayes. Joining online for specific agenda items: David Stockler.

**Agency and external staff for specific items:** David Andersen and Eva Kokkermans (NSW DCCEEW, online).

**Meeting Opened:** 10.30am

### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

#### 1.1 Acknowledgement of Country:

#### 1.2 Apologies: Marina Hollands, Trevor Sultana.

#### 1.3 Confirmation of Agenda Items:

#### 1.4 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.

#### 1.5 Minutes of Previous Meeting, 5 December:

- Resolved the minutes of meeting held on [5 December 2024](#) be confirmed as a correct record. Taken as read.  
P Griffiths/B Logue (carried)

#### 1.6 Actions arising from minutes

- Refer to action sheet (attached).

### 2. CUSTOMER SERVICES:

#### 2.1 Customer Services update (D Stockler)

- WaterNSW provided an update on Customer Services, including customer experience and billing (credit card surcharges, warm handovers, staff training and third-party consent), metering (S91i analysis, compliance and DQP concierge update), assessment and approvals (processing trends and insights), customer outreach days and service improvements (recording and reporting SMS service).
- At the last round of CAGs, WaterNSW discussed the potential of offering an objections style process for third party consent on [temporary groundwater trades](#), based on feedback around challenges for applicants to seek/obtain consent from impacted landholders. WaterNSW is working with an applicant to trial the new process, and pending the trial, WaterNSW may offer this on a 'fee for service' basis.
- Information on the triage and assessment process and FAQs on trading water can be found at [Trading water - WaterNSW](#) and [Groundwater temporary trades \(71T Dealings\)](#).
- A summary of [S91i](#) (faulty metering equipment) statistics was presented. There has been a steady increase since 2020 in the number of S91i applications lodged as customers become more aware of their obligations.
- A state-wide overview of compliance statistics in the DQP portal was presented and discussed. Over 5000 meters are now compliant and set up in the DAS ([Data Acquisition Service](#)). WaterNSW can track

the progress of every certificate in the portal to assist water users with their compliance. Many of the delays were due to administrative errors and basic information missing. WaterNSW is proactively working with DQPs during the validation stage to eliminate the ability to input incorrect information and increase the number of forms that pass first time.

- As previously discussed, WaterNSW has set up a dedicated [DQP concierge service](#) to support DQPs across all facets of the compliance process, including submitting the right data and assisting with any roadblocks. Benefits are being realised as 89% of initial registrations pass first time as data submitted is correct. Submitting the right data at the beginning of the process reduces delays, reduces costs and speeds up compliance.
- Members were reminded that **water supply work and/or water use approvals** are granted for a set term 2-10 years, after which they expire, however approval holders can apply for an extension (see [FAQs](#)). WaterNSW issues notices to approval holders ~60 days before an approval expires, providing options on how to apply to [extend the approval](#). Based on customer feedback, WaterNSW is working to improve customer experience in this area and will continue to explore options with NSW DCCEEW (Water) to simplify the process, including investigating system changes to simplify and improve the online self-service options, improve targeted communications and explore alternate payment methods. Members commented they didn't feel it was a hard process. WaterNSW appreciated this positive feedback.
- WaterNSW advised that in the coming months customers will be able to register for the [Customer Portal](#) to update their contact details online, view all current licence and approvals, and apply for new water supply and water use approvals. Additional features (including mapping) will be added to the portal over time. Currently BLR bore applications and amendments to BLR bore approvals can be done in the portal.
- Members were reminded that customers can [subscribe to a free SMS reminder service](#) for annual or monthly **recording and reporting requirements**.

## 2.2 Non-Urban Metering Reforms review update (D Andersen, NSW DCCEEW)

- NSW DCCEEW provided an update on the Non-Urban Metering (NUM) review including new metering requirements and implementation dates, implementation progress, ongoing implementation work, telemetry uplift program and key messages.
- There are 2 new categories that eliminate the requirement for a DQP and LID/telemetry and encompass a large number of coastal users. All licensed water users have mandatory recording and reporting requirements, regardless of size of works or total entitlement:
  - users with **>15ML but <100ML of total entitlement** must install a pattern-approved meter (unless exempt) by 1 December 2027 or next approval renewal date (whichever is later);
  - works nominated by **total entitlement of ≤15ML** do not require a meter unless trading allocations (excludes ≥500mm surface water pumps) and must be compliant by 1 December 2027.
- Coastal users with **≥100ML total entitlement** must install a pattern-approved meter, local intelligence device (LID) and telemetry by 1 December 2026.
- Discussion occurred around ability for telemetry to work in the area due to floods. NSW DCCEEW reiterated that under the regulations, telemetry is required per the regulations, stating 95% of users in the Lower Nepean/Hawkesbury area are below these thresholds. The rules are consistent across all coastal valleys (including areas of flooding). If water users can't meet the requirements, there are exemptions that can be applied for, however there are no broad-brush exemptions for any system. NSW DCCEEW is happy to meet with individual water user groups, or customers individually, to discuss further. Even with an exemption there are still mandatory recording and reporting requirements.
- The department and WaterNSW are having dedicated meetings with water users in relation to government-owned meters (GOM). WaterNSW is responsible for installing meters and telemetry to the current standards for GOMs. If meters are handed back, they should meet the standards prior to handover (discussions would occur with individual landholders on a case-by-case basis). WaterNSW is aware of flood damaged meters and what we need to do to make good.
- In the coming weeks, letters will be sent to ~400 approval holders with 100ML or more of entitlement to inform them of their obligations and includes details of a webinar planned for late April/early May.

- A webinar will also be held in June (in collaboration with WaterNSW and NRAR) to inform water users about the non-urban metering rules.
- For more information on changes to the metering rules, exemptions, key documents and tools and to subscribe for metering updates, go to <https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/nsw-non-urban-water-metering>
- To subscribe to NSW DCCEEW non-urban metering updates – [www.watergroup.dpie.nsw.gov.au/non-urban-metering-subscribe](http://www.watergroup.dpie.nsw.gov.au/non-urban-metering-subscribe)

### **3. OPERATIONS:**

#### **3.1 Water Planning & Delivery update (R Charan)**

- WaterNSW provided a review of recent operations, including total system storage, monthly rainfall totals, inflows, environmental releases, BOM rainfall and temperature forecast and water quality.
- As of 28 February, water held in Greater Sydney dams was 94.6% of total storage volume. Rainfall across Greater Sydney catchments in February 2025 was below the long-term median, except for Warragamba, Shoalhaven and Fish River.
- The trigger to recommence Shoalhaven transfers = 75% total system storage. Earliest expected date for storage decline to 75% is January 2026.
- Discussion occurred around NSW DCCEEW drought predictions and BOM forecast of normal rainfall predictions and questioned the single source of truth. WaterNSW advised that the BOM is the source of truth for our river forecast (short term) and the department looks at long term forecasts.
- WaterNSW advised we work with NSW DCCEEW on active management when we go into a drought (and cease to pump rules if operational level drops below triggers). NSW DCCEEW is responsible for policy and questions in relation to cease to pump rules should be directed to them.

#### **3.2 Regional Operations update (B Mayhew)**

- An update on Sydney regional operations was presented and discussed, including operations and maintenance, PFAS monitoring and reporting and cost management and reporting (per action GS2307.04).
- There has been no flood operations and no significant water quality events, with WaterNSW focussing on routine operations and maintenance.
- There are some information sessions coming up with customers of government-owned meters to discuss changes to the rules and what they mean for individual properties (8 April @ Goulburn; 9 April @ Camden). Lower Nepean Hawkesbury WUA advised they have some events coming up that would be good for WaterNSW to attend to speak to customers about metering. J Zadro to liaise with WaterNSW out of session.
- LNHWUA – we have some events coming up that would be good to have WNSW there to talk to customers about metering. Jenny to liaise with us.
- Shoalhaven Water thanked WaterNSW for a recent staff tour of Warragamba Dam. WaterNSW advised that if any organisation would like to take a tour of any of our dams, we are more than happy to organise.
- WaterNSW is continuing to sample and [publish results](#) for PFAS. WaterNSW is speaking with Sydney Water on the management of existing PFAS in Lake Medlow and Greaves Creek dams.
- B Mayhew is continuing to work with the finance team to provide commentary and improved reporting to CAGs around the opex and capex reports. An example of proposed new reporting presented and discussed. Members want clarity around what customers are paying for, stating currently some of the line items are not clear and there are anomalies with allowance vs expenditure. WaterNSW aims to have the new reporting in place for the next meeting.

#### **4. PRESENTATIONS/CONSULTATION:**

##### **4.1 CAG Engagement with NSW DCCEEW (Water Group) (B Maher / E Kokkelmans, NSW DCCEEW)**

- WaterNSW and NSW DCCEEW (Water) outlined a refreshed approach to CAGs to improve regionally focussed engagement into the next term of office.
- CAG meetings will be held in person twice per year per CAG, with the option of additional online meetings as required, initiated by customers or WaterNSW, and two CAG Chairpersons meetings per year.
- WaterNSW-specific content will be presented in a morning session, with NSW DCCEEW (Water) and other agency content in the afternoon, with the afternoon session open to broader stakeholders. Members will be asked to provide input on proposed agenda items in advance to ensure the right people are available to discuss relevant matters.
- NSW DCCEEW (Water) provided an overview of how their sessions will be managed, including providing a high-level forward-looking engagement calendar to give customers a clear line of site as to what is coming up. NSW DCCEEW (Water) is also working to provide more regionally focussed information, with implementation of a regional dashboard on their website, and is working with other agencies to coordinate engagement where possible.
- Members are pleased to have the opportunity to have the department in the room, stating a forward-looking consultation agenda to understand what is coming will be good; would be good to get Regional Water Strategy updates with a range of stakeholders in the room; as long as conversations go both ways the proposal has merit; a distinct difference with separation of departments will be great.
- Members feel NRAR should also be part of meetings where relevant, stating lack of communication between the three agencies is frustrating for customers. Having all parties in the room will show the interrelation between the agencies from a customer point of view.

##### **4.2 CAG Next Term of Office and Recruitment (B Maher)**

- The current CAG term of office ends on 30 June 2025 and nominations are now being sought from water user groups and industry organisations for the next term, commencing 1 July.
- Nominations close on 17 April and members are encouraged to liaise with their water user group/organisation if they wish to renominate.
- WaterNSW provided the opportunity for the Lower Nepean Hawkesbury WUA to join the Coastal-Hunter CAG (as in the past), stating their issues may be more aligned with irrigators on that CAG. WaterNSW will send information for review/consideration.
- Some members stated that splitting the CAG will diminish the function of the CAG in the Sydney catchment if categories of customers (irrigation/local water utilities) are separated. Members suggested holding a cross-over meeting of the current Greater Sydney CAG, with specific items in the morning for particular customers (eg LWUs), a joint session in the middle, and a session in the afternoon for irrigation customers. WaterNSW is open to seeing what will work for each CAG.
- Members would like to see Sydney Water represented on the CAG. WaterNSW has reached out to them.
- Prior to the first meeting WaterNSW may look at hosting an online CAG education/induction session for new (and existing) members.
- Members suggested providing members with a list of acronyms would be helpful. Noted.

##### **4.3 Stakeholder Engagement (B Maher)**

- An overview of WaterNSW's Stakeholder Engagement Policy was provided, including our engagement approach and commitment to customers and the community.
- A state-wide and valley-specific stakeholder list was presented and feedback sought from members on key groups or organisations not included on the lists. Feedback and additional stakeholder information can be provided at any time via [engagement@waternsw.com.au](mailto:engagement@waternsw.com.au)

**5. BUSINESS PAPERS (taken as read)**

**6. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

**6.1 Pricing submission update (B Maher)**

- Consultants from IPART are currently reviewing WaterNSW's proposal and WaterNSW has provided additional information as requested. We are not aware when the draft determination will be released, however we will endeavour to advise CAG members as soon as known. Customers are encouraged to sign up to IPART's website to be notified when the draft determination is released and provide a submission.
- IPART is required to provide a minimum 28 days for stakeholders to make submissions once the draft determination is released.
- Members noted that water quality is a key addition to the new Operating Licence, to be in place within 12 months, and questioned if there will be any engagement with customers on the plan. Taken on notice.

**Action GS2503.01:** WaterNSW to advise if there will be any engagement with customers on the plan for water quality per the new Operating Licence.

**Responsibility:** B Maher

**Meeting review and close:**

**Next face to face meeting:** 18 September 2025

**Meeting closed:** 12.55pm

## Greater Sydney Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 27 March 2025

### New actions

Action number	Action	Person responsible	Status
<b>GS2503.01</b>	WaterNSW to advise if there will be any engagement with customers on the plan for water quality per the new Operating Licence.	B Maher	

### Carried forward actions

Action number	Action	Person responsible	Status
<b>GS2307.04</b>	WaterNSW to look at how the financial reports are presented to the CAG and how the information could be provided in more granular detail for customers.	P Backo	<b>In progress (refer to agenda item 3.2).</b> B Mayhew is continuing to work with the finance team to provide commentary and improved reporting to CAGs around the opex and capex reports. WaterNSW aims to have the new reporting in place for the next meeting.

### Sub-committee actions (from August 2024 meeting with Fish River Water Supply members)

Action number	Carried Forward Actions	Person responsible	Status
<b>SC-GS2408.07</b>	WaterNSW to respond to request to improve financial reporting in the CAGs. Customer feedback is that it is not clear.	T Hockly	Refer to action GS2307.04 above.