

Murray-Lower Darling Customer Advisory Group

Minutes of Meeting

Location: Wentworth Memorial Hall, Wentworth
Date: 11 March 2025
Time: 9.30am

Present: Sally Dye (Chair), Gordon Fox, Rachel Strachan, Michael Pisasale, Peter Hamilton, Judith Damiani, John Lolicato, Hilary Johnson, Peter Hamilton, Louise Burge (online) and Sophie Baldwin (online). Linda Christesen (online), Paul McPherson (Anabranch Water) and Alan Whyte (Pomona Irrigation) attended as observers.

WaterNSW: Brendan Maher, Jonathan Belej, David Wood, Ben Coffey, Suzanne Wheeler, Kristen Carter, Sonia Townsend (online), Yarraan Doyle (online) and Toni Hayes. Online for specific agenda items: David Stockler, Russell Cocks, Martin Brooks, Andrew Richardson, Stephanie Kermode.

Agency and external staff for specific items: David Andersen, Allan Raine, Shahadat Chowdhury, Prue Bodsworth (online) and Peter Hyde (online) (NSW DCCEEW) and Tom Zouch and Joe Davis (MDBA, online).

Meeting Opened: 9.30am

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country:

1.2 Apologies: Michael Chalmers, Paul Childs, Luca Ferla.

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, 31 July and 30 October 2024:

- Resolved the minutes of meetings held on [30 October 2024](#) be confirmed as a correct record of the meeting. Taken as read.

R Strachan/G Fox (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.
- Temporary trade applications are reviewed against a triage process between WaterNSW and NSW DCCEEW, then if required, a hydrogeological assessment will be done to assess impact. A reduced

volume may be offered or third party consent required. Information on the triage and assessment process and FAQs on trading water can be found at [Trading water - WaterNSW](#) and [Groundwater temporary trades \(71T Dealings\)](#).

- Questions occurred around groundwater permanent trades and assessment criteria/guidelines. WaterNSW to clarify assessment criteria and provide to CAG.

Action MLD2503.01: WaterNSW to clarify assessment criteria/guidelines around permanent trade of groundwater and provide to CAG.

Responsibility: D Stockler

- 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.
- Discussion occurred around faults with government-owned meters that have S91i forms already submitted, with customers receiving multiple alarms per day indicating faults and advising to report (more prevalent on hot days) and questioned if they have to continue to report it. WaterNSW advised they are aware of the issue and will contact members out of session to discuss.

Action MLD2503.02: WaterNSW to contact R Strachan, S Dye and L Burge out of session to discuss faulty meters/alarms.

Responsibility: M Brooks

- 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.
- Members requested metering statistics be segmented into the northern basin and southern basin. WaterNSW advised that 98-99% of government-owned meters are currently complete. There are 15,000 works in the northern and southern basin, of which not all are required to be metered (inactive, not constructed etc), so is hard to give accurate data given the uncertainty of status of works. WaterNSW can provide some data, but we don't provide compliance statistics.

Action MLD2503.03: WaterNSW to provide segmented metering data for the northern and southern basin for the next meeting.

Responsibility: D Stockler

- 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 DCCEE (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.
- WaterNSW is hosting a customer outreach day in Wentworth on 2 April to discuss water regulation matters with customers who cannot access our local offices (moved from Mildura at suggestion of CAG members).
- WaterNSW advised customers can check what is registered on their work approval via the [Customer Portal](#), where work approval and licence information is in the one place. Additional features (including

mapping) will be added to the portal over time and customers are encouraged to register. Currently BLR bore applications and amendments can be done in the portal.

- Members expressed frustration at lack of ways to pay, stating it took days to get sorted, and suggested issuing an invoice would be the best avenue so customers can pay via BPay or online.
- Members were reminded that customers can [subscribe to a free SMS reminder service](#) for annual or monthly **recording and reporting requirements**.
- WaterNSW and Victoria are proposing to use a combined 'single queue' and randomisation process for trade applications for the 1 July 2025 Barmah trade opportunity, with eligibility criteria. This will remove the 'fastest finger first' advantage. Market participants will be kept up to date as this progresses.
- Members questioned if this approach is the same for CEWH entitlements and if they are subject to the same trade rules. The CEWH advised they trade in the same manner as all other customers in the valley and subject to the same rules.

2.2 Metering update (D Andersen, NSW DCCEEW)

- NSW DCCEEW provided an update on the Non-Urban Metering (NUM) review including new metering requirements, implementation progress, ongoing implementation work, telemetry uplift program and key messages.
- An overview of the new metering and measuring requirements was presented and discussed, including compliance dates. There are 2 new categories that eliminate the requirement for a DQP and LID/telemetry:
 - 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;
 - all licensed water users have mandatory recording and reporting requirements, regardless of size of works or total entitlement.
- **Inland users with ≥100ML total entitlement and/or pumps ≥500mm** must already be compliant with a pattern-approved meter, local intelligence device (LID) and telemetry.
- The Australian government has funded a [Telemetry Uplift Program](#) which aims to assist eligible water users in the Murray-Darling Basin with compliance to the metering rules. By opting-in to the program, eligible water users will be offered free telemetry devices, including a local intelligence device (LID) and data logger. Priority will be given to groundwater sites, however works that take surface water may also be considered. Registration closes 31 March 2025.
- 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>

3. OPERATIONS:

3.1 Water Planning & Delivery (D Wood)

- WaterNSW presented a review of recent operations in the Murray and Lower Darling valleys, including storage and inflow review, rainfall and temperature outlook, water use summary, weather outlook and an overview of Murray and Lower Darling operations.
- Discussion occurred around the 2024/25 Murray water use summary, with members questioning if the data includes high security environmental water. WaterNSW advised this is not included in the table presented. Members stated the environmental licences should be represented as HEW not general security extractive water.
- Lower Darling members complimented the agencies on how the river was run this water year, stating keeping water quality under control has been greatly appreciated by customers.

Murray operations:

- High system flows were driven by customer demand and MDBA operational demand (focus on management of Lake Victorian and SA demand).
- Irrigation demand has been high with hot and dry conditions, supported by high allocations.
- MIL infrastructure (Edward River Escape) and Edward-Wakool system used to support MDBA delivery of operational water downstream.
- There has been limited environmental water delivery over the summer. Autumn flows/delivery through Edward-Wakool system, with elevated flows supported by pulses in most main stems over the next 1-2 months (ie Colligen, Yallakool, Edwards).
- Planned/ongoing activities: starting to consider requirements to plan for winter maintenance period/deliveries through Edward-Wakool systems; and maintaining communications with MDBA to identify likelihood of restricted inflow to Merran/Bullatale through autumn and will work with the MDBA to resolve issues as they arise.

Lower Darling operations:

- 370GL has entered the Lakes since December 2024 (associated with December rainfall in the north of the basin). Inflow now minimal, with Wilcannia flow ~500ML/day.
- Base flow requirements at W32 as per WSP (January-March = 350ML/day, April = 300ML/day).
- Releases have been and are being directed by the Water Quality Working Group to manage water quality in the Menindee town weir pool during the high-risk months.
- The MDBA has been calling on water from Menindee Lakes since August with only a brief period (December) where flows were supported by the Environment Water Allowance (EWA).
- Call at W32 currently 1,200ML/day (at 4/3/25). Releases from Lake Menindee maximised, remainder sourced from Lake Pamamaroo. Balancing top lakes resource through Pamamaroo Inlet Regulator (PIR).
- Current releases to Great Darling Anabranch form part of MDBA's call on water, supported by e-water holders. At the request of e-water managers, we expect to see deliveries wind up through autumn.
- Members questioned what the volume is for dead storage in Menindee Lakes, stating over the years the number has differed. The volume for dead storage is likely to come out in the Menindee Review.
- WaterNSW operates Menindee Lakes to the rule of the day as per the Western Regional Water Strategy - 195GL of active storage in the upper Lakes was identified as providing 12 months of critical needs for the Lower Darling.
- If conditions remain dry, current forecasts have the Lakes reaching 480GL in mid-2025. WaterNSW will continue to work with the agencies to understand future operational requirements and transition once 480GL is reached.
- The priority for the MDBA is to deliver down the main channel wherever possible (rather than through irrigation system/MIL).
- Members sought an update on the Koondrook-Pericoota inlet regulator. WaterNSW advised this is still in progress, with funding to be negotiated.
- Members stated it is important that water users are involved in shortfall response planning for the Murray, and engagement with communities that are affected is done early.

3.2 Allocations update (S Chowdhury, NSW DCCEEW)

- NSW DCCEEW provided an update on water allocations, including allocation fundamentals in NSW, overview of how water is allocated in the NSW Murray, allocation history and delivery loss.
- Allocations are published on the 1st and 15th calendar day (or next working day).
- An overview of the resource distribution of 17 February 2025 was presented and discussed.

- Discussion occurred around carryover and original intent, current interpretation and third-party impacts, with members stating it is a great tool, however the current use has moved away from the original intent and the way it is interpreted is forcing people to use it. Members requested a workshop with NSW DCCEEW to discuss further.
- Members stated the Wakool 'loss' budget is not a loss but an 'allowance' and should be distinguished as such. NSW DCCEEW noted member comments, however stated that in terms of MDBA delivery, they call it a loss.
- Members raised concerns about the impact to the resource if the upper two lakes are called on and requested discussion with NSW DCCEEW, MDBA and the CEWH out of session to discuss options (refer to action MLD2503.05).

3.3 Regional Operations (B Coffey)

- WaterNSW provided an overview of preventative maintenance plan, corrective maintenance work orders and current issues,
- Doubling over of the lifting chain on spillway gate 11 at Hume Dam cause a jam in the guide chute, which left the gate temporarily inoperable at 4.75m, allowing 200ML/day to flow over the spillway. The gate was able to be fully closed ~10 hours later. A detailed investigation was conducted and several actions recommended. New chute fabrication is underway for planned installation by mid-November.

3.4 WaterNSW Drought Management Approach (S Wheeler)

- WaterNSW introduced its drought management approach for the Murray and Lower Darling regulated valleys, including key elements of the drought contingency plan, what we heard and what we learned from previous droughts, an overview of drought stages, what happened in the last drought and key measures implemented, how we work together with other agencies, drought preparedness, potential drought contingency measures for consideration, and engagement with CAGs, customers and the community.
- Feedback from customers during drought workshops held in 2023 highlighted the need for improved communication, increased transparency regarding our approach and intergovernmental decision making and clarification of agency roles and responsibilities.
- An overview of the Murray and Lower Darling valleys during the last drought was presented and discussed, including key actions that were taken during various stages of drought. A snapshot of the 2017-2020 drought in each valley can be found by clicking the relevant valley: [Murray](#) / [Lower Darling](#).
- WaterNSW's drought management approach has three key focus areas: condition monitoring and early warning; collaboration with agencies and customers; and drought response actions (as required), which are direct outcomes from lessons learned.
- WaterNSW has developed a framework to assess drought indicators to provide early warning to customers and communicate with other agencies. We update NSW DCCEEW with our intel, that informs announcement of any changes to the drought stages. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is responsible for overall drought management across regional NSW and NSW DCCEEW is responsible for water resource management.
- The options and tools WaterNSW has developed for drought preparedness will help:
 - continuous monitoring and provide early warning
 - enable proactive and collaborative work with the relevant government agencies and customers
 - maintain WaterNSW's business continuity in performing our principal functions
 - guide WaterNSW operations to optimise the management of water resources in drought
 - clarify roles and responsibilities and support timely decision-making
 - manage drought in alignment with NSW government rules and policies.
- WaterNSW presented drought response actions (WaterNSW led) and potential contingency measures for consideration, specific to the valley, that could be implemented during the various drought stages of drought. These responses may vary according to the conditions and severity of drought and will be reviewed as the drought unfolds.

- Members noted the Murray Irrigation supply system was utilised in the last drought and should be considered as an option.
- Members stated there was a conscious decision to disconnect the Edward/Wakool from the system in the millennium drought and stated this should be a last stage. Ability to target sections should be built into any drought response.
- WaterNSW reiterated the options are a guide, not a process, and will be worked through in consultation with the department and stakeholders as the need arises.
- Discussion occurred around engagement principles and how we will engage with customers and the community in times of drought. Feedback was sought from members on how best to engage with CAGs, noting each valley is different therefore tailormade engagement will be essential.
- Members stated it is important for the community to be aware of the drought stages (1-4) and understand what the triggers are for each stage.
- Members stated that communication and engagement with ‘people on the ground’ is essential.

4. EXTERNAL AGENCY ITEMS:

4.1 NSW DCCEE (Water)

Revised Prescribed Wetlands maps for draft unregulated WSPs (P Hyde)

- In response to a Natural Resources Commission (NRC) recommendation to improve protection for significant wetlands when unregulated inland WSPs are replaced, a revised approach to water supply works and trade rules is being proposed to protect internationally (Ramsar), nationally and regionally important wetlands within the plan areas.
- An overview of the revised approach was presented, including what was heard (2023/24) and how NSW DCCEE responded, what is included in the revised approach (2025) and proposed next steps.
- Following community feedback, the NSW Government has updated the maps of proposed prescribed wetlands areas in 6 draft unregulated inland WSPs. To accompany map changes, there is a proposal to introduce off-river pool rules to restrict new works and trades in areas where they don’t currently apply, and trade rule exceptions only in specific circumstances.
- The Murray and Lower Darling have not been included in the above. NSW DCCEE will prepare revised maps and consult on the amendment process with stakeholders in the later half of this year.
- The draft rules relate to water access (water supply works and trade) under the WMA Act, they do not change land use or land zoning and don’t impact cultivation consents. Existing works are not affected.
- Feedback is invited by 23 March, prior to finalising the WSPs later this year. [View the updated maps and factsheet](#)
- For more information [Revised protections for inland NSW wetlands – March 2025](#) and [Revised approach to water supply works and trade rules for inland NSW wetlands](#)

Murray Underuse (A Raine)

- NSW DCCEE provided an overview on Murray SDL and LTAAEL outcomes, including how an SDL assessment is undertaken, the NSW Murray SDL, steps in assessing underuse, behaviour change, recommendations from the “Harris paper” (tabled by CAG members and distributed with meeting papers), issues to consider and next steps.
- There are 2 recommendations in the Harris paper:
 - NSW water authorities allowing access to unregulated flows and that diversions from these flows are not debited against the licensed general security water user’s allocation.

Response: initial consideration to be given to increasing supplementary allocations (as has been trialled previously), and consistent with reductions where SDL exceeded.

 - NSW water authorities announcing increases in general security allocation in the year following a wet year, for example up to 140% or other relevant amount, as water becomes available.

- **Issues to consider:** LTAAEL compliance is also required, and it indicates less of an issue (uses long term results); this shows current conditions are only 4.3% less than LTAAEL; rules can't be changed such that the LTAAEL is exceeded, otherwise it triggers a "growth in use" action by NSW (ie a reduction in supplementary allocations); the Basin Plan is currently under review, and this includes SDLs – there is a risk of making changes ahead of this, before the outcome is known; and any changes to NSW Murray may require agreement from MDBA / other jurisdictions.
- **Next steps:** gain a better understanding of why users aren't utilising all their allocations; discussion with the MDBA re direction of SDL (from Basin Plan review), water recovery, and process **if** NSW requested rule changes; pending this, and development of NSW position, explore "wet year" allocations options (increased supplementary access / account limit).
- L Christesen advised a letter was also sent to the NRC in September 2024 on behalf of 7 Murray stakeholder groups (included in meeting papers).
- Members stated there is conflicting advice from Canberra about what is available to use but there is no access. NSW DCCEEW agreed, stating there is no more physical water in the dam and the solution is more the wet year allocation policy (make it available in a wet year, or year after, when there is no impact to others).
- Members stated the intent of the paper in 2022 was to start the discussion and expressed frustration around the time taken to progress, with a lot of the issues creating underuse already identified (including carryover). NSW DCCEEW acknowledged the time taken to progress the issue and the department is looking into what can be done.
- The quickest option to progress now will be increasing supplementary allocations (already exists within the WSP); the second option will take time. Members noted that not all landholders have supplementary licences and questioned why the department is not looking at cumulative rule changes.
- Members questioned if it is feasible and worthwhile to reestablish the underuse working group to progress the issue. Discussion to continue out of session.

Action MLD2503.04: NSW DCCEEW and L Christesen to liaise out of session regarding reestablishing the underuse working group to progress underuse issues in the Murray.

Responsibility: L Christesen/A Raine (NSW DCCEEW)

- Members supported what the department is doing to look at options in a wet year for general security licence holders as long as it has no effect on high security or other licence holders.
- Members appreciate and thanked NSW DCCEEW for continuing to progress the issue.

Prerequisite Policy Measures (action MLD2410.02) (P Bodsworth, NSW DCCEEW)

- NSW DCCEEW provided an update on Prerequisite Policy Measures (PPM), including overview of PPMs, piggybacking, return flows, how PPMs are being used, PPM principles, roles and responsibilities and key priorities.
- PPMs are legislative and operational rule changes to improve the use and accounting of water for the environment in the southern-connected Murray-Darling Basin and have been in place in NSW since 30 June 2019. They are a requirement for SDLAM projects to have their intended outcome and are legislated in NSW through Water Sharing Plans and codified in Procedures Manuals.
- Currently, PPMs apply to held environmental water (HEW) and River Murray Increased Flows (RMIF) and comprise of PPMs comprise of 'piggybacking' and 'return flows'.
- Discussion occurred around return flows, with members stating there has been no clear and transparent information on the loss factors and only desktop assessments have been done.
- Further information can be found at [NSW DCCEEW Water Group Environmental Water Management in NSW](#)

4.2 Murray Darling Basin Authority update (MDBA) (J Davis)

- The MDBA provided an overview of operations, including recent conditions, current operations and storage outlook and an update on the Menindee Review.
- Inflows for the 2024-25 water year are very much below the inflows for 2023-24 and below the long-term average.
- MDBA active storage is 53%, compared to 81% same time last year. Dartmouth and Hume are continuing to fall, with 150GL/month transferring from Dartmouth to maintain Hume levels while maximising volume held in Dartmouth to minimise losses. Lake Victoria target minimum level of 350GL by the end of May.
- Menindee releases are being used to manage Lake Victoria levels (downstream release targeting 1200ML/day at Weir 32).
- Without rainfall the lakes are likely to fall below the 480GL trigger level where MDBA loses the ability to call water in coming months. Tracking to have greater than 195GL of active storage in the upper lakes when the 480GL trigger is met.
- The Menindee Review is currently in phase 1(problem definition phase), which is about building a shared understanding of issues and operating arrangements and rules and establishing a joint government position on the future of the lakes. Phase 2 is investigation and vision (establish desired outcomes and explore options and build a shared vision for the future of the lakes in consultation with the community) and phase 3 is options development.
- The review is an 18 month project however the MDBA is hoping to have options by the end of the calendar year. There is a parallel process looking at fishways and some of these recommendations will feed through. Carp mitigation is part of this. Dissolved oxygen is an issue, with carp being an ongoing challenge in all inland rivers.
- Members queried if there will be a written submission process. This is still being looked at, noting it would be good to get written submissions going forward.
- Members questioned if process links are occurring internally with the Menindee Review and the Basin Plan Review. The links are starting to be established. The Menindee Review is for joint governments but will be passed into the Basin Plan Review.
- Members questioned if decreased flows will be a major part of the investigations. The MDBA is partnering closely with NSW about northern flows and looking to see what recommendations come out of this work and how it relates to the broader picture for Menindee.
- Stakeholders will be consulted on release of the report and the MDBA will provide further updates to the CAG at the next meeting.

5. PRESENTATIONS/CONSULTATION:

5.1 CAG Engagement with NSW DCCEEW (B Maher/C Parker, NSW DCCEEW)

- WaterNSW and NSW DCCEEW 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 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 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 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 suggested holding a full day workshop with NSW DCCEEW to clear the backlog of issues previously raised and discuss any issues that are coming up, stating there is often insufficient time at the CAG for detailed consultation.
- Members raised concerns that opening the afternoon session to all community, while a good idea in many respects, will hinder outcomes for the CAG. WaterNSW advised the plan is to work with the CAG for discussion topics in advance.
- Members questioned if there are other forums for stakeholders to speak to NSW DCCEEW on critical issues on a more regular basis. NSW DCCEEW advised there are opportunities throughout the year for customers to have input into projects and programs, where subject matter experts are in the valley engaging with customers (eg RRCP and SDLAM).

Action MLD2503.05: Chairperson to put together a list of outstanding issues/proposed discussion items for NSW DCCEEW for consideration of an out of session meeting.

Responsibility: S Dye

- Members stated the proposal looks like a good structure.

5.2 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.

5.3 Stakeholder Engagement (B Maher/K Carter)

- 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

6. BUSINESS PAPERS (taken as read):

- Taken as read.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS:

7.1 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 asked that WaterNSW request the MDBA to be more transparent with their fees and charges (breakdown of what customers are paying for).

Action MLD2503.06: WaterNSW to pass on member feedback to the MDBA around transparency of fees and charges.

Responsibility: B Maher

7.2 Agenda items for the next meeting

- Members requested adding a presentation on water quality to the agenda for the next meeting (overview of how WaterNSW does its testing, plans for any improvement or if doing anything different, how water quality issues are communicated etc).
- Members requested WaterNSW and NSW DCCEEW provide an overview of the Commonwealth water market reforms (how being implemented) and implications to trade (particularly permanent trade).

Meeting review and close:

Next meeting: 19 August 2025 @ Deniliquin

Meeting closed: 3.45pm

Murray-Lower Darling Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 11 March 2024

New actions

Action number	Action	Person responsible	Status
MLD2503.01	WaterNSW to clarify assessment criteria/guidelines around permanent trade of groundwater and provide to CAG.	D Stockler	
MLD2503.02	WaterNSW to contact R Strachan, S Dye and L Burge out of session to discuss faulty meters/alarms.	M Brooks	Complete.
MLD2503.03	WaterNSW to provide segmented metering data for the northern and southern basin for the next meeting.	D Stockler	
MLD2503.04	NSW DCCEEW and L Christesen to liaise out of session regarding reestablishing the underuse working group to progress underuse issues in the Murray.	L Christesen/A Raine (NSW DCCEEW)	
MLD2503.05	Chairperson to put together a list of outstanding issues/proposed discussion items for NSW DCCEEW for consideration of an out of session meeting.	S Dye	
MLD2503.06	WaterNSW to pass on member feedback to the MDBA around transparency of fees and charges.	B Maher	

Carried forward actions

Action number	Action	Person responsible	Status
MLD2410.01	WaterNSW to invite NSW DCCEEW to the next CAG meeting to discuss the ADF rules and triggers.	T Hayes	Complete. Refer to agenda item 4.1 and 4.2.
MLD2410.02	WaterNSW to invite NSW DCCEEW to the next CAG meeting to discuss Prerequisite Policy Measures (PPMs).	T Hayes	Complete. Refer to agenda item 4.1.
MLD2410.03	WaterNSW to request NSW DCCEEW to attend the next meeting to discuss the Penelco Channel option (in liaison with MDBA, refer to agenda item 3.3).	T Hayes	Complete. The MDBA advised this will be part of the Menindee Review.

MLD2410.04	WaterNSW to request the MDBA includes discussion on losses and Penelco Channel at the next meeting.	T Hayes	Complete. Refer to agenda item 4.2.
MLD2410.08	WaterNSW to seek further advice from the Water Quality team in relation to Ellerslie to Wentworth Junction.	J Belej	<p>Complete.</p> <p>Advice provided from RACC coordinator within Water NSW (Regional Algal Coordinating Committee).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WaterNSW undertakes monitoring and reporting as per the RACCs guidelines and Service deed • Scale up monitoring and testing at sites when water quality events occur – such as event last year in the Wentworth weir Pool, 6 additional sites had testing and reporting. These were in addition to the current 20 routine sites between Wilcannia and Tapio. • Last 18 months using satellite imagery to monitor and inform when algal events can be occurring in the storages and river reaches. • Additional sites (with fixed infrastructure/telemetry/data feed) would require funding • Options of manipulation of Lock 10 Weir pool sits with MDBA operations and has been captured as an item in Menindee Review discussion) • The Water Quality team is happy to come to the CAG and present on the role of WaterNSW in water quality management. <p>Members stated the junction with the Murray is a real backwater that is not getting flushed. This is exacerbated by large irrigators at Ellerslie and is becoming a bigger problem with a massive hole. Bertundy is the last water measurement from the northern basin before it becomes a Murray resource and is very important (relying on EC readings from Bertundy). WaterNSW will pass on feedback to the Water Quality team.</p>
MLD2407.04	MDBA to review concerns and issues around changing patterns of water use and reduced river flows (in conjunction with NSW DCCEEW) and report back to the CAG.	J Hickey (MDBA)	In progress.
MLD2403.03	WaterNSW to contact the MDBA and ask if they can provide an update on the trial of releases with return flow to the Murray via the Great Darling Anabranh.	J Belej	MDBA to present at next meeting.