

Peel Customer Advisory Group

Minutes of Meeting

Location: WaterNSW, 33 Gunnedah Rd, Tamworth
Date: 16 March 2026
Time: 9.00am

Present: John Richards, Ian Coxhead, Tom Chaffey, Bruce Logan, Paul Keyte, Wes Brown (observer), Chrissy Stannard (observer), Zarni Bear (online).

WaterNSW: Brendan Maher, Ashley Webb, Lachlan Browne, Sam Stokes, Martin Prendergast, Gavin Armstrong, Michelle Yeaman and Toni Hayes. Online for specific agenda items: Rob O'Neill, Amanda Fuller, Phil Glastonbury.

Meeting Opened: 9.00am

1. Welcome and Introductions:

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

1.2 **Apologies:** Stuart Garland.

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 Peel CAG Meeting, 8 September 2025

– Resolved the minutes of the Peel CAG meeting held on [8 September 2025](#) be confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting. Taken as read.

J Richards/B Logan (carried)

1.6 Actions arising from minutes

– Refer to action sheet (attached).

2. WaterNSW update:

2.1 WaterNSW update and Land & Water Operations overview (R O'Neill)

– WaterNSW provided an update on its new operating model and status of the business transformation program. The labour reduction process has concluded with approximately 280 FTE roles removed, primarily affecting metropolitan areas, senior and middle management, and corporate functions.

– The Land and Water Operations portfolio structure was outlined, with priorities including improving end-to-end collaboration and process improvements, strengthening consistency in customer engagement, maintaining service levels despite resourcing changes, embedding teams and supporting team morale.

– Top of mind items for the Peel CAG for our team were discussed, including the northern basin connectivity program, Tamworth water security initiatives, Chaffey to Dungowan pipeline use and approvals, metering compliance and the MDBA review.

3. Customer Services:

3.1 Water Accounting & Metering (L Browne)

- WaterNSW provided an overview of iWAS, highlighting its key functions, including how customers can manage their water accounts, view meter data, and enter meter reads. An outline of the Data Acquisition Service (DAS) dashboard and its reporting capabilities was also provided.
- [iWAS](#) is WaterNSW's online water accounting platform, giving regulated, unregulated and groundwater customers easy, anytime access to their water accounts. A range of instructional videos and user guides is available on the WaterNSW website.
- The [DAS](#) provides customers with real-time visibility of their water usage. It allows users to view meter reads in hourly increments, monitor telemetry battery health, view alarms, and export their own data. As a result of customer feedback, the DAS is now accessible directly through iWAS.
- To create a DAS account, please reach out to customer.helpdesk@waternsw.com.au for assistance in setting up your account.
- A comparison of meter/telemetry types (Modbus vs Pulse) was presented and discussed as requested by members. Pulse meters are more prone to installation issues (calibration) and prone to interference from pumps (might miss a pulse or gain a pulse). WaterNSW has been working with DQPs to upskill and has quality assurance checkpoints in place to ensure the correct data is getting through to the DAS from all telemetry types.
- Discussion occurred around meter types and robustness in the field, and the implications of the discontinuation of the 3G network on some meter technology.

3.2 Customer Assessments & Approvals (T Lawson)

- WaterNSW provided an overview of agency roles within the water sector, customer service standards (actual vs target) for applications and approvals, a proposal to change the end-of-year final submission date for temporary trades, and consultation on a proposal to discontinue the third-party consent process for temporary groundwater trades.
- WaterNSW continues to meet or exceed **customer service standards** for applications and approvals in most areas, with performance standards monitored monthly.
- WaterNSW is working with NSW DCCEEW on a proposal to change the final submission date to lodge **end of year temporary trades** to 20 June and sought feedback from members. Customers will be notified in advance if the change occurs. Members were also reminded that the customer service standard for temporary trades is 90% processed within 5 business days.
- Members stated the change of date would not make a huge difference to Peel users however questioned if there will be a grace period at the start if users miss the new deadline. WaterNSW advised it will take this on board.
- Feedback was sought from CAG members on a proposal to discontinue the **groundwater temporary trade third-party consent process**, which was reinstated on 1 July 2024. Since reintroduction, WaterNSW has only approved 8 temporary trades (<0.2%) where a third party has consented to potential impacts on their water take.
- WaterNSW has received numerous complaints about the process, including concerns from customers who are reluctant to contact potentially impacted bore holders and from bore holders who lack the expertise to determine whether they should consent. There is also ambiguity under the *Water Management Act* regarding whether WaterNSW is lawfully permitted to seek consent in this way.
- Feedback on the proposal to discontinue can be provided via email to engagement@waternsw.com.au.
- Members highlighted issues with completing online applications, stating there is no one to speak to for assistance when completing an application. Customers can [book an appointment](#) with WaterNSW to discuss water licensing enquiries and applications. Phone appointments are available Monday-Thursday, and face-to-face appointments are available every Tuesday.

3.3 Flood Works, Floodplain Management Plans and Strikeforce (R O'Neill)

- An explanation of a flood work, [flood work approvals](#) and Floodplain Management Plans (FMP) was provided, including what constitutes a flood work and when a flood study is required. An outline of the recently established Floodplain Strikeforce (between WaterNSW and NSW DCCEE) was also provided.
- WaterNSW acknowledged the complexity of this area and reaffirmed its commitment to supporting customers through the process. This includes offering optional [pre-application meetings](#) to discuss proposed works, provide general guidance on assessment requirements, and help determine whether a flood study is needed before an application is lodged and fees are paid.
- An interagency working group between WaterNSW and NSW DCCEE has been formed to address stakeholder concerns and strengthen implementation of FMPs. A [Floodplain Strikeforce Interagency Action Plan](#) has been developed for consultation, proposing eight theme areas and 37 agreed actions aimed at improving processes, guidance, systems and tools to assist landholders with flood work approval applications and assessments.
- Feedback on the Action Plan can be submitted to engagement@waterNSW.com.au by 24 April.
- In partnership with NSW DCCEE, WaterNSW has developed a Flood Work Implementation Guideline which will provide additional information on the FMP, what constitutes a flood work, how to apply, the assessment process and free mapping tools. It is estimated this will be published in May 2026.
- WaterNSW will also publish monthly data on flood work application volumes, determination outcomes and the number of outstanding applications on a dedicated online dashboard.
- For more information go to <https://www.waterNSW.com.au/customer-services/water-licensing/flood-work-approvals>

4. OPERATIONS:

4.1 Water Planning & Delivery (S Stokes)

- WaterNSW presented a review of operations in the Peel, including recent rainfall and outlook, actual vs statistical inflows, storage volumes, overview of the water resource monitoring dashboard, water availability and usage year to date and operations.
- The current season (and next) will be order on demand, with possible e-water orders towards end of this water year (April-June 2026). Members stated it was a great idea for the environmental water holders to piggy-back e-water onto irrigation orders.
- The primary contact for the Peel valley is Gavin Armstrong; the on-call number for the Peel is 02 9685 4347.
- Operational updates are available at [WaterInsights](#).

4.2 Regional Operations (M Yeaman)

- Jerome Douziech has been appointed the new Executive General Manager of Built Infrastructure and commenced on 2 February 2026. He is planning to attend the next round of CAGs.
- The Chaffey to Dungowan pipeline EIS and operating strategy is currently paused due to funding constraints, pending the outcome of IPART's determination. If not funded, WaterNSW will be in discussion with NSW DCCEE for an alternate funding source to ensure long term arrangements are in place. WaterNSW will continue to provide updates to the CAG.

4.3 Finance proposal for next CAG (B Maher)

- As part of its submission to IPART, WaterNSW committed to providing clearer visibility to customers on WaterNSW's financial performance and transparency of charges, including at a valley level.
- WaterNSW proposes to share an updated view of performance relative to revenue, as previously shared with CAGs during the pricing engagement, using the most current financial information, to support transparency and ongoing engagement (examples provided and feedback sought).

- The discussion is intended to provide broader context on how economic conditions and management decisions are influencing financial outcomes, rather than focusing solely on short-term performance alone.
- WaterNSW is also keen to hear customer perspectives on the importance of long-term financial sustainability and how this should inform future planning.
- Members were happy with the information as presented, stating it is good information and digestible, and are keen to see a breakdown of the business as a whole as well as at a valley level.

5. Presentations/Consultation:

5.1 WaterInsights app (P Glastonbury)

- WaterNSW has released its new WaterInsights app, available for Android users in the Google store (Apple to come). The app was tested by ~50 users, including some CAG members, and has the same functionality as the previous Water Live app. It is the fastest platform for real-time data.
- An overview of the key features was presented and discussed. The app is built from the website, and data for most sites is produced every 15 minutes.
- The WaterLive App will eventually be retired, scheduled for late 2026, once customers have had an opportunity to download and adopt the new WaterInsights App.
- The Real Time Data (RTD) website and the WaterInsights online portal will continue to operate as they do today, providing reliable access to water data and information.
- The daily river report in RTD is available on the WaterInsights website (almost identical) and WaterNSW is looking to incorporate into the app.
- WaterNSW encourages everyone to use the app and provide feedback via a direct feedback loop in the app. This is the first iteration, so we are keen to hear from customers on what is useful and what isn't.

6. BUSINESS PAPERS (taken as read):

- Taken as read.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS:

7.1 CAG Survey Results (B Maher)

- The CAG survey at the end of the last round provided positive results, with ~50 members responding:
 - separating WaterNSW and NSW DCCEEW agenda items was valuable, with positive feedback received;
 - presenting online is suitable for short presentations (up to 20 minutes) however in person presentations are valued by customers where possible and provide better outcomes, understanding and discussion;
 - discussion of proposed policy and current policy are vital for both users and implementors;
 - it is important for NSW DCCEEW to host an afternoon session and that should continue; the separation will help clarify the roles of WaterNSW and NSW DCCEEW.
- WaterNSW reiterated that additional online CAG meetings are available to members at any time throughout the year as required, provided 50% of members agree.

Meeting review and close:

Next meeting: 7 September 2026, Tamworth

Meeting closed: 11.30am

Peel Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 16 March 2026

New actions

Action number	Action	Person responsible	Status
	Nil new actions		

Carried forward actions

Action number	Action	Person responsible	Status
	Nil carried forward actions		