

Peel Customer Advisory Group

Minutes of Meeting

Location: WaterNSW, 33 Gunnedah Rd, Tamworth
Date: 7 September 2026
Time: 9.00am

Present: Tom Chaffey, Wes Brown, Paul Keyte, Chrissy Stannard, Will Treloar, Bruce Coxhead, Daniel Coe, James McLoughney and Josh Graf (online).

WaterNSW: Andrew George, Rob O'Neill, Leeanne Chau, Brendan Maher, Ken Gee, Lachlan Browne, Vikrant Malik, Chris Bath and Toni Hayes. Online for specific agenda items: Amanda Fuller and Phil Glastonbury.

Meeting Opened: 9.00am

1. Welcome and Introductions:

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

1.2 Apologies: John Richards, Ian Coxhead.

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, 16 March 2026

- Resolved the minutes of the Peel CAG meeting held on [16 March 2026](#) be confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting. Taken as read.

W Brown/T Chaffey (carried)

1.6 Actions arising from minutes

- Refer to action sheet (attached).

1.7 Election of Chairperson

- Carried over to next meeting due to no quorum.

2. OPERATIONS:

2.1 Water Planning and Delivery (K Gee)

- WaterNSW presented a review of operations in the Peel Valley, including rainfall, inflows, storage levels, Chaffey Dam storage forecast, water availability and usage, and an overview of the water resource monitoring dashboard.
- Recent rainfall across the Peel Valley has been above average over the past three months. The Bureau of Meteorology outlook indicates neutral rainfall conditions are expected across northern NSW over the coming three months, with temperatures increasing.
- Chaffey Dam recorded 11GL of inflow over the past six months, consistent with the 60th percentile of historical inflows. Twenty-four month inflows to Chaffey Dam totalled 146GL, aligning with the 20th percentile inflows and highlighting the contrast from March 2025 onwards.
- Chaffey Dam has been spilling since 29 March 2025, with a total spill volume of approximately 100,460ML recorded on 8 September 2026.

- The Drought Flood Risk Index (DFRI) indicates the Peel is in 'dry conditions'. Chaffey Dam 36 month forecast volume under various inflow sequences presented and discussed. Even under dry conditions, Chaffey Dam level will be 60-80GL.
- Water availability remains across all licence categories, with total available water of 44,436ML. Year-to-date usage remains relatively low, with 1,523ML used across the system and 327ML accessed under uncontrolled flow provisions.
- Peel Valley operations are currently being managed on an order-on-demand basis. The primary contact for the Peel Valley is Gavin Armstrong.
- Upcoming season demand discussed.
- Operational updates are available at [WaterInsights](#).

3. CUSTOMER OPERATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

3.1 Customer Assessments and Approvals (A Fuller)

- WaterNSW provided an overview of customer service standards, and updates on classifying works, end of water year trade submissions and third party consent for temporary trades.
- Application processing times have increased in some areas due to resources being redirected to support the statewide works classification program. WaterNSW has engaged additional temporary staff and improvements are expected by October 2026.

Floodplain Strikeforce

- WaterNSW provided an update on the work of the Floodplain Strikeforce, including customer education initiatives, updated guidance materials, historical works review, publication of flood work application data and improved pre-application processes.
- A draft Floodplain Strikeforce Interagency Action Plan was released in March for consultation and feedback, and a dedicated working group has been established to review feedback and identify key barriers and potential solutions. The action plan and accompanying What We Heard report is available on our website [here](#).
- A separate flood work approval is no longer required where an existing work is specifically nominated under a Water Supply Work Approval (or combined approval) and its primary purpose is water supply.

Works Classification Program

- The NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (NSW DCCEEW) has amended the Water Management (General) Regulation 2025. This change requires each water supply work to have a work classification recorded. The work classifications have been introduced to provide a clear record of when a work is not taking licensed water and so is exempt from metering.
- An update on the [works classification program](#) and improvements made in response to customer feedback was provided, including additional guidance materials and support through the WaterNSW website. Customers can also [book an appointment](#) with WaterNSW staff for assistance throughout the classification process (online and face-to-face in some offices).
- Feedback on the [Customer Portal](#) has been shared with our technology teams and improvements are being prioritised based on customer needs.
- All customers are encouraged to review the details of works listed on their approvals and contact WaterNSW if updates are required prior to [classifying works](#).

Temporary Trades

- WaterNSW advised that the earlier end-of-water-year temporary trade submission deadline introduced this year improved processing outcomes and is expected to remain in place for future years and will be proactively communicated to customers going forward.

Third-Party Consent

- No final decision has yet been made regarding potential discontinuation of temporary trade third-party consent, as discussed at the previous meeting. Any future changes would be supported by a comprehensive communications and implementation process.

4. WATERNSW UPDATE:

4.1 WaterNSW Executive update (A George)

- WaterNSW provided an overview of its new Corporate Strategy, focused on strengthening core operations, diversifying revenue and modernising the organisation to improve efficiency, customer outcomes and long-term affordability.
- Key organisational challenges were noted, including ageing infrastructure, climate variability, reform uncertainty and increasing costs.
- A significant focus is being placed on delivering capital works, including accelerated infrastructure investment, fishway projects, cold water pollution (CWP) initiatives and ongoing asset renewals and investment.
- Diversifying revenue sources is a key strategic priority to help reduce reliance on traditional revenue streams. As the fourth largest landholder in NSW, WaterNSW is exploring opportunities to generate additional revenue from its land holdings, including carbon market opportunities, pumped hydro and long-duration energy storage projects, including potential partnerships with energy providers.
- WaterNSW highlighted opportunities to leverage artificial intelligence, technology and data to improve business processes and customer service, supported by ongoing investment in workforce capability and digital skills.
- Members commented that WaterNSW is doing a good job and customers appreciate downward pressure on prices.

4.2 WaterNSW's Financial Performance (V Malik)

- WaterNSW is committed to improving transparency, accountability and customer engagement under the Rural Valleys determination. A high-level overview of financial performance was presented, including unaudited FY26 results, the FY27 business plan outlook following IPART's final determinations, and key financial risks, assumptions and future considerations. Valley-specific information was also provided.
- WaterNSW highlighted improved financial sustainability following the organisational transformation program and final IPART determinations. Financial performance has improved substantially, with Rural Valley finances more sustainable than previously forecast. Government affordability contributions remain important to future sustainability and infrastructure investment remains a high priority.
- The determination strengthens WaterNSW's financial position, supporting ongoing service delivery, infrastructure investment and access to funding.
- Peel Valley's FY26 financial performance was impacted by lower government contributions and one-off environmental planning costs. Peel is forecast to return to profitability from FY27, supported by improved cost recovery, customer subsidies, government contributions and operational efficiencies. ROI is expected to return to positive levels, while ongoing investment in infrastructure, environmental programs and dam safety initiatives will support long-term service and financial sustainability.
- It was noted that 80% of Peel revenue is supported by government funding. The Peel's revenue base is predominantly fixed, limiting the financial impact during dry periods.
- Members sought clarification on target ROI and borrowing costs. WaterNSW advised there is no specific ROI target, although returns are considered against industry benchmarks and the regulated WACC. WaterNSW also advised that maintaining a strong credit rating remains important to managing borrowing costs and supporting long-term financial sustainability.

5. REGIONAL OPERATIONS:

5.1 Regional Operations (M Yeaman)

- WaterNSW provided an overview of the Peel Capital Works Program for FY27-FY29, including project funding arrangements, prioritisation and delivery status.
- Priority projects are focused on renewals, dam safety and compliance works at Chaffey Dam, with several lower-priority renewal projects deferred. Key projects include electrical and crane safety improvements, dam safety works, hydrometric renewals, and biodiversity offset monitoring associated with the Chaffey to Dungowan Pipeline.
- Five projects are in execution and 20 are in the initiation phase.
- Discussion included dam safety inspection requirements, with WaterNSW advising that five-yearly testing forms part of regulatory dam safety obligations and complements routine surveillance activities.
- An update was provided on the Chaffey Pipeline, including maintenance and operational approvals, environmental approval requirements, operating strategy development and ongoing planning processes. WaterNSW is exploring opportunities to accelerate the timeframe and operational readiness.
- Members sought clarification on responsibility for water used during pipeline flushing. WaterNSW advised that where the water is taken by a landholder or Tamworth Regional Council, the relevant account would be debited; otherwise, the volume would be accounted for by WaterNSW.

6. BUSINESS PAPERS (taken as read):

- Taken as read.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS:

7.1 H5N1 Avian Influenza (R O'Neill)

- WaterNSW provided an update on the detection of H5 avian influenza in wild birds across multiple Australian states.
- WaterNSW is working with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to monitor the situation and ensure appropriate preparedness measures are in place. DPIRD is the lead response agency in NSW.
- WaterNSW has developed operational response protocols, identified higher-risk sites and is assessing potential impacts on water quality and water supply operations and is collaborating with DCCEEW on management strategies for priority wildlife locations, including Lake Brewster and the Menindee Lakes.

7.2 Town Water Risk Reduction Program (B Maher)

- WaterNSW is supporting Local Water Utilities (LWUs) across regional NSW to strengthen raw water quality risk management through the Town Water Risk Reduction Program (TWRRP). Funded by NSW DCCEEW, the program supports regional communities in managing water quality risks and building long-term drinking water resilience.
- Under the TWRRP, WaterNSW leads the source water component of the program, focusing on identifying raw water quality risks and supporting local water utilities to proactively manage those risks at the source, recognising source water protection as the first and most effective barrier to safe drinking water.
- To learn more about TWRRP, please visit our [website](#) or email info.TWRRP@waternsw.com.au

7.3 WaterInsights update – customised reporting (P Glastonbury)

- WaterNSW provided a live demonstration of new WaterInsights features introduced in response to customer feedback, including customised daily river reports, daily email and SMS reports sent directly to them based on user-defined parameters, and scheduled notifications.
- Members asked about the future of Water Live. WaterNSW advised that the platform will be maintained for the time being, however the long-term direction is to transition customers from Water Live to the WaterInsights app and portal, with the aim of delivering all current Water Live functionality and improved user experience over time.

Meeting review and close:

Next meeting: date TBC, Tamworth

Meeting closed: 11.30am

Peel Customer Advisory Group – Actions – 7 September 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.		