

Town Water Risk Reduction Program—Outcomes and action items

Meeting 5 | 26 May 2021, 9:30 – 11:30 am

Attendees

Table 1. Attendees.

Invitees	Guests	Program team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Aaron Drenovski, Goldenfields Water (County Council member) Clr Bill West, Local Government NSW Mr Brendan Guiney, NSW Water Directorate Mr Graham Kennett, Kyogle Council (LWU General Manager member) Dr Katrina Wall, NSW Health Water Unit Mr Michael Blackmore, Director Local Water Utilities, DPIE – Water Mr Peter Marczan, Environment Protection Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Jenny Bennett, Executive Officer Central West Joint Organisation of Councils Mr Sanjiv Sathiah, Senior Policy Officer, Infrastructure and Finance, LGNSW Ms Carmel Krogh OAM, TWRRP Program Advisor Ms Amanda Chadwick, Executive Director Water Sector Reform, DPIE Water Ms Jane Blakeney – Communications Manager, DPIE Water 	<p>Town Water Risk Reduction Program team members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Erin Cini – Director (Chair) Mr Sascha Moege Mr Josh Tickell Mr Pdraic Gidney (acting Secretariat) Mr Andrew Fraser

Apologies

1. Dr Annalisa Contos, Atom Consulting (Consultant Representative)
2. Ms Rebel Thompson, Executive Officer Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils
3. Mr David Kirby, Brewarrina Shire Council (LWU manager)
4. Ms Melissa Gibbs, Director Policy & Sector Development, OLG

Update on actions from previous meeting

Table 2. Actions from last meeting.

Action	Responsible	Status
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—Water to extend LGNSW’s invitation to Minister Pavey to participate in the LGNSW Water Conference virtually	Amanda Chadwick (TWRRP team)	Complete
Provide input by COB Wednesday 29 April on suggested workshop interviewees.	Panel Members	Complete
Better reflect inter-relationships between the different workstreams in final focus area work plans	TWRRP Team	Complete
Provide detailed comments on draft focus area work plan proposals	Namoi JO	Complete
Add State agency meeting summary/feedback as a standing item to the Panel meeting (also incorporating the quarterly Senior Officers Group meeting feedback).	Glen Colley (TWRRP team)	Complete

Actions arising from this meeting

Table 3. Actions from this meeting.

No.	Issue	Action	Responsible, due date
1	The Panel raised that Joint Organisations are likely to have useful feedback in relation to gaps in the existing arrangements for supporting local water utilities in incidents and emergencies, and would be valuable to include in the team’s initial consultations in this space (ahead of wider engagement with the sector).	At tomorrow’s (27/05/21) meeting of the chairs and executives of NSW Joint Organisations, mention that the TWRRP team would welcome input in this area from any interested Joint Organisations. Also engage directly with Central NSW JO and Namoi JO.	Erin Cini (TWRRP team) <u>Due:</u> 27/05/21
2	Ensure the TWRRP’s planned virtual workshops and regional roadshow sessions have a good balance of voices from every part of the sector (i.e. local water utilities (councillors and staff), co-regulators, private sector).	Provide the Panel with information about who has signed up to these events so far, and ask for advice on how to address any gaps or imbalances in composition.	Erin Cini (TWRRP team) <u>Due:</u> 31/05/21

No.	Issue	Action	Responsible, due date
3	In addition to stakeholders identified by the TWRRP team, Local Government NSW may be able to provide useful input on the proposed consultancy exploring Council approaches to integrating their IWCM and IP&R strategic planning.	Seek Local Government NSW input on the proposed consultancy.	Glen Colley (TWRRP team) <u>Due:</u> 31/05/21
4	In addition to stakeholders identified by the TWRRP team, Local Government NSW may be able to provide useful input on gaps in the existing arrangements for supporting local water utilities to manage incidents and emergencies.	Seek Local Government NSW input on gaps in the existing support arrangements.	Paddy Gidney (TWRRP team) <u>Due:</u> 31/05/21
5	There are a range of risks inherent in the use of virtual workshops as an engagement mechanism, and it is important to ensure the Program team's planned workshops mitigate these.	Have a follow-up discussion with Jenny Bennett about how to manage these risks to optimise the TWRRP team's virtual workshops.	Sascha Moege (TWRRP team) <u>Due:</u> 04/06/21
6	The TWRRP team should be careful in its language when describing the proposed consultancy exploring barriers to Councils integrating their IWCM and IP&R strategic planning. There is a risk Councils could misinterpret the goal of this work as, for example, intending to evaluate or audit Council strategic plans (which is not the case).	Refine the language of the proposed consultancy to emphasise that the focus is on removing barriers for Councils who see the value in an integrated approach.	Glen Colley (TWRRP team) <u>Due:</u> 04/06/21

Panel guidance

Item 1: Regulatory framework workshop series (virtual and in-person regional workshops)

- Broad support for the proposed approach to the workshop series, and particularly the emphasis on the department listening rather than presenting at the initial virtual workshops.
- While it is important to explain the Program's new collaborative design approach, the Program team also needs to be clear that it has heard the significant amount of feedback already provided about what does and does not work well in the current regulatory framework. The team should ensure that the upcoming workshops provide sufficient context, guidance and facilitation to enable meaningful discussions, particularly when discussing regulatory objectives, roles and responsibilities.
- It will be important to ensure there is a balanced range of voices at each workshop reflecting key stakeholders in the sector, such as councillors, council employees, co-regulators, industry representatives and private sector entities.

- It will be important to carefully manage the risk of initial workshop discussions getting off-track and jumping to specific solutions before considering roles and responsibilities and regulatory objectives in a systematic way.
- There are a range of risks inherent in the use of virtual workshops to facilitate meaningful discussion – e.g. ineffective use of polling and other apps, time limitations or ineffective chat management. It will be important to ensure the Program team mitigates these risks in the two initial sets of virtual workshops.

Item 2: Consultancy exploring linkages between IWCM strategies and the IP&R framework

- The Program team must be careful in its language when describing the proposed consultancy exploring barriers to Councils integrating their IWCM and IP&R strategic planning. There is a risk Councils could misinterpret the goal of this work as, for example, intending to evaluate or audit Councils' level of integration of strategic planning instruments (which is not the case).
- The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—Water Utilities Branch noted that there is no right or wrong approach to integration, and that the focus of this work would be on exploring current approaches and identifying barriers to integration and best practices for Councils who see value in integrating their IWCM and IP&R strategic planning activities.
- Local Government NSW can provide useful input on this proposed piece of work and should be consulted with.

Item 3: Potential pilots to inform regulatory re-design

- Broad support for the draft criteria proposed for the evaluation of pilots for the Program (not limited to regulatory framework pilots).
- In selecting from potential pilots, and IWCM pilots in particular, it will be important to achieve a balance between 'depth' of scope (i.e. the pilot has high potential to generate significant, useful insights) and speed (i.e. ensuring the pilot can be completed or significantly progressed before the end of the Town Water Risk Reduction Program).
- In relation to IWCM pilots, it is important to clearly communicate to the sector that while the Program team is open to considering all pilot proposals, there is near universal support from the sector that strategic service planning should remain an essential role for local water utilities.

Item 4: Skills and training

- Broad support for the gaps and potential options identified by the Program team.
- Specific support that the Program team had correctly identified the most immediate gap in this space as the lack of clear training pathways for local water utility staff.
- Noted that another significant issue is that some local water utilities will be unable to resource the implementation of an appropriate training pathway for their staff even once this is identified. Suggested this should be considered by the Program team following the work on identifying appropriate training pathways.
- Agreed that it is worthwhile to explore the option of creating a centrally held bank of learning resources that can be accessed by Registered Training Organisations, but noted that a similar approach had been trialed and proved prohibitively expensive in Queensland. Suggested it would be useful to learn from that experience.

- Support for the actions the Program team is taking to collaborate with and inform other relevant NSW Government agencies about this work, including TAFE NSW, Skills and Training NSW, and the Department of Regional NSW.

Item 5: State Government support in emergencies

- Broad support for the high-level gaps so far identified.
- An additional gap may be that some designated State Government combat agencies do not always have resourcing proportionate to their responsibilities, particularly in relation to the more administrative components of the recovery phase following significant emergencies.
- An additional gap may be connectivity (e.g. existing relationships and contact channels) between local water utilities and relevant State Government entities, for example electricity distribution network providers, in both the planning and response phases of incidents. This is related to, but distinct from, the related lack of scenario testing involving local water utilities and relevant State Government entities.
- Noted that Local Government NSW and Joint Organisations may both have useful input to provide on gaps in the existing arrangements for supporting local water utilities to manage incidents and emergencies. These entities should be included in the initial consultations in this workstream (ahead of wider engagement with the sector).

Other matters

- The Program team is planning to send out a survey next week (before 4 June) to its distribution list to gauge the sector's perceptions of Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—Water's existing regulatory framework and approach. The team plans to repeat this survey quarterly or six-monthly and use the results as a benchmark of the progress of the regulatory reform workstream.

Next meeting

- 16 June was proposed as a next date (a week earlier than scheduled) to avoid a conflict with the Program's regional roadshow.
 - The Program team decided after the meeting to hold the next meeting on 22 June.