

Town Water Risk Reduction Program—Outcomes and action items

Meeting 12 | 15 December 2021, 9:30 – 11:30 am

Attendees

Table 1. Attendees.

Invitees	Guests	Others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clr Bill West, Local Government NSW • Mr Brendan Guiney, NSW Water Directorate • Mr Michael Blackmore, Director Local Water Utilities, DPIE – Water • Mr Aaron Drenovski, Goldenfields Water • Mr Graham Kennett, Kyogle Council • Ms Jenny Bennett, Central NSW Joint Organisation of Councils (items 1 to 8). • Mr David Kirby, Brewarrina Shire Council • Dr Annalisa Contos, Atom Consulting (items 4 to 12) • Ms Melissa Gibbs, Office of Local Government • Dr Katrina Wall, NSW Health Water Unit. • Mr Peter Marczan, Environment Protection Authority (items 1 to 7) • Ms Erin Cini – Director Town Water Risk Reduction Program (Chair) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Sanjiv Sathiah, Senior Policy Officer, Infrastructure and Finance, LGNSW • Ms Amanda Chadwick, Executive Director Water Sector Reform, DPIE Water • Mr Graham Attenborough, Chief Operating Officer, DPIE Water (items 4 to 12). • Ms Carmel Krogh, Independent Advisor to DPIE Water. • Ms Kerryn Conroy, Principal Policy Officer, Office of Local Government • Ms Fiona Conlon, TWRRP Team Pilot Coordinator, DPIE Water. • Mr Bart Kellett, LWU Team, DPIE Water (items 1 to 7). 	<p>Town Water Risk Reduction Program team members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Sascha Moege • Dr Nanda Altavilla • Mr Josh Tickell • Mr Andrew Fraser • Mr Glen Colley (Secretariat)

Apologies

- Ms Rebel Thomson, Namoi Unlimited Joint Organisation of Councils.

Outcomes

Table 2. Agenda items and outcomes.

Agenda item	Outcomes
1	Acknowledgement of country/welcome
2	Administrative matters <ul style="list-style-type: none">No conflict of interest declarations were made.
3	Outcomes/actions from the previous meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Panel received a briefing from the TWRRP team on the outcomes and actions from the previous meeting, which were accepted.The only outstanding item related to Crown lands – Glen to contact Brendan and Bill this week to finalise. ACTION 12.1 Glen Colley to contact Clr Bill West and Brendan Guiney to discuss Crown Lands issues.

4

Councillor awareness training – Discussion

- The TWRRP team provided an update on this training package.
- DPIE Water will host the training package on its website with links provided from the relevant OLG and LGNSW webpages.

GUIDANCE:

- Panel members provided the following feedback.
 - This is a great first step and every effort should be made to optimise the package.
 - However, it was pointed out that new councillors could be overwhelmed by this and could turn off fairly quickly. Consider some changes to the structure and format. Needs to be put in a way that new councillors will understand. Councils will need to think about how they manipulate the info.
 - It was noted that tailoring might be difficult for general purpose councils as they have so much other induction material to cover in their general business. A condensed version of the information in the handbook would also be a good idea. Goldenfields Water is working on their own, tailored induction pack for new board members, which Aaron Drenovski will provide to the TWRRP team.
 - There is scope for this to be tailored specifically to councils, and it would be preferable to provide the information in a template format that individual councils can drop their own information into. This will get a better result.
 - Provide a PowerPoint that steps through the key messages of the handbook, as a supplementary approach, so a staff member or consultant can deliver it to councils.
 - The inclusion of case studies is strongly supported but it is difficult to evaluate without seeing them as they are not finalised yet.
 - It was noted that the timeframe for feedback is tight. To get this out by February 2022 with people's comments factored in by then will be difficult.
 - Need to be careful around particular messaging. For example, including the 75/25 income stream comment is concerning. The TWRRP team noted that expected changes to regulatory framework will necessitate the handbook to be updated after 30 June 2022 to address this.
 - It is critical that councillors understand their local circumstances - where their water comes from and how their assets need to be managed. It was noted that the main aim of this package was to be a backstop not the only point of information that new councillors receive on water management. The best approach will be for councils to ensure that they take councillors out to look at the infrastructure they are responsible for and understand it (the handbook is a supplementary reference).
 - In places, the wording seems to imply that councils are underperforming. This should be addressed.
 - Water re-use should be highlighted as a key concept.
 - In relation to formatting, adding pictures of people talking, being trained etc may make it more engaging.
 - Cllr Bill West, Jenny Bennet and Brendan Guiney offered to provide more detailed feedback to the TWRRP team in the coming week.

ACTION 12.2

The TWRRP team to reflect the Panel's feedback in the handbook and materials.

ACTION 12.3

Nanda Altavilla to discuss this matter further with Cllr Bill West, Jenny Bennett and Brendan Guiney.

Agenda item	Outcomes
	<p>ACTION 12.4 Aaron Drenovski to send Goldenfields Water induction pack to TWRRP team.</p>
5	<p>Working groups – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TWRRP team provided an update on the roadmap working groups. <p>GUIDANCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel members provided the following feedback. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consultation with Nous Group has been great. It’s a challenging way to think ○ It was suggested that the groups need to refer more to the economic value of water. The TWRRP team advised that water economics and water security will be a focus in the next stage of working group discussions (when there will be more detailed discussions generally).
6	<p>Co-regulator commitment - Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TWRRP team provided an update on the progress of this Regulator Commitment, advising that the document will be between the “Local Water Utilities Regulators”, including DPIE Water, NSW Health, EPA, OLG, NRAR, Dams Safety NSW and IPART. • The TWRRP team was hopeful of getting the final version endorsed by the relevant executives of each agency prior to Christmas. However, endorsement may be delayed to January 2022. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Panel asked for information about how the document would be promoted to the sector, and recommended that if it is released just prior to Christmas, it should be promoted January and February to ensure the industry does not miss the release. • The TWRRP team advised that the intention is to release the commitment once there is agreement/endorsement from all agencies, the release will be announced at that time, and if it is before the end of the year will be further promoted in January and February following the Christmas/New Year period.

Agenda item	Outcomes
7	<p data-bbox="296 439 794 472">Secure Yield Analysis project – Update</p> <ul data-bbox="344 488 1428 958" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="344 488 1428 555">• Bart Kellett from the Water Utilities Team provided an overview of this project, which is developing a revised approach to Secure Yield Analysis modelling for the sector.<li data-bbox="344 555 1428 705">• This work is about:<ul data-bbox="440 584 1428 705" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="440 584 1428 645">○ helping LWUs to access and use the info coming out of Regional Water Strategies (RWSs),<li data-bbox="440 645 1428 705">○ making clearer how the sector can use the outputs of the modelling (in a simple way) when it is available.<li data-bbox="344 705 1428 766">• It was noted that, as more and more RWS data becomes available it will become more and more useful for LWUs.<li data-bbox="344 766 1428 862">• Recently the water knowledge team has released a timeline for the release of data: https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/484604/open-data-framework-timeline.pdf<li data-bbox="344 862 1428 922">• The Namoi JO Regional Town Water Strategy is to be the first pilot of the revised approach.<li data-bbox="344 922 1428 958">• Draft town water security guidelines will be developed for consultation in 2023. <p data-bbox="296 987 440 1021">GUIDANCE</p> <ul data-bbox="344 1021 1428 1601" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="344 1021 1428 1451">• The Panel provided the following comments and feedback:<ul data-bbox="440 1055 1428 1451" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="440 1055 1428 1088">○ The sector is looking for a reliable one source of truth.<li data-bbox="440 1088 1428 1205">○ It was noted that IWCM strategies cost councils hundreds of thousands of dollars at the moment, and that it is not appropriate or possible for most LWUs to be solely responsible for water security modelling in a catchment as they do not manage all of the water in the catchment.<li data-bbox="440 1205 1428 1294">○ There is uncertainty in the sector about the role of the Department/NSW Government in ongoing regional water modelling. Local Water Utility sector wants to avoid duplicate modelling and additional costs.<li data-bbox="440 1294 1428 1384">○ The Department should acknowledge that the water security modelling project is a work in progress and address the sector's concerns about what the timeframe and pathway is for finalising the project.<li data-bbox="440 1384 1428 1451">○ It needs to be articulated where groundwater and unregulated systems fit in with the Regional Water Strategies.<li data-bbox="344 1451 1428 1601">• The Water Utilities Team noted that there may be some timing challenges with the new regulatory framework and the fact that the RWSs are not due to be finalised until the end of 2022. It would be good to understand what the needs of LWUs are. The Water Utilities Team is keen to have conversations about how to better share the info in a way that works for everyone.

Agenda item	Outcomes
8	<p>IWCM pilots – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TWRRP team provided an update on the progress of the strategic planning pilots and introduced the Pilot Coordinator, Ms Fiona Conlon. A discussion was held about the key aspects in relation to assessing each pilot: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> There should be clear milestones reached by March 2022 to feed into the drafting of the new regulatory framework. By July 2022, it should be evident the extent to which the pilots provide useful case studies to support the new regulatory approach For each participating council, something useful for them must be able to be delivered in the short-term. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a discussion about how integrate the learnings from the pilots with working groups, to avoid unintended/perverse outcomes, and about the potential limitations of calling for EOIs, rather than coming up with a process and testing. The Panel cautioned that rhetoric and reality must match in relation to ensuring that that participating councils are not disadvantaged by their participation in a pilot (as previously committed to by DPIE) when it comes time for DPIE Water to review their IWCM strategy. The expectations of councils also need to be managed. The TWRRP team advised that internal DPIE Water discussions were underway to operationalise this policy position. Other key factors to assess from these pilots include: community engagement, and identifying and working with other NSW Government agencies.
9	<p>WaterNSW pilots – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TWRRP team provided an update on a number of pilots currently in development with WaterNSW in relation to dam safety, catchment management/water quality and river operations. The Water Directorate advised of a Victorian water quality data partnership which may be of interest in relation to these pilots: https://www.water.vic.gov.au/water-reporting/surface-water-monitoring There was no further discussion.
10	<p>Implementation – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Blackmore provided an update on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New licencing information that was very recently published by the Water Utilities team. https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/water-utilities/licensing-assistance DPIE Water Utilities Team’s recent engagement with a number of water utilities.
11	<p>Panel items for discussion – No items were raised.</p>

Agenda item	Outcomes
12	<p>Next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will not be a January 2022 Panel meeting. • A SAP breakfast is planned for the LGNSW water conference on Thursday 9 February 2022. • Next meeting to be held Wednesday 22 February 2022 – 9.30am start.

Actions arising from 15 December 2021 meeting

Table 3. Summary of actions.

Item no.	Action	Responsibility	Due date
12.1	Contact Clr Bill West and Brendan Guiney to discuss Crown Lands issues	Glen Colley	31 January 2022
12.2	Reflect the Panel's feedback in the handbook and materials.	Nanda Altavilla	24 December 2021
12.3	Discuss councillor induction feedback further with Clr Bill West, Jenny Bennett and Brendan Guiney.	Nanda Altavilla	24 December 2021
12.4	Send Goldenfields Water induction pack to TWRRP team.	Aaron Drenovski	24 December 2021

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