

Town Water Risk Reduction Program—Outcomes and action items

Meeting 11 | 24 November 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 (items 1 - 9) • Mr Brendan Guiney, NSW Water Directorate • Dr Leslie Jarvis, NSW Health Water Unit • Mr Michael Blackmore, Director Local Water Utilities, DPIE – Water • Mr Aaron Drenovski, Goldenfields Water • Mr Graham Kennett, Kyogle Council • Ms Rebel Thompson, Executive Officer Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils • Mr David Kirby, Brewarrina Shire Council • Dr Annalisa Contos, Atom consulting • Ms Melissa Gibbs, Director Policy & Sector Development, OLG (items 3 - 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 (item 4 onwards) • Mr Graham Attenborough, Chief Operating Officer, DPIE – Water (items 1 -4 and 6-13)) • Ms Carmel Krogh, Independent Advisor to DPIE Water (items 1 - 7). • Ms Kerry Conroy, Principal Policy Officer, Office of Local Government • Mr Micah Starkis, Director Data & Info Knowledge ICT & Data, DPIE - Water (items 8 – 10). 	<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

- Mr Luke Walton, Executive Director Planning Policy, DPIE – Planning & Assessment.
- Dr Katrina Wall, NSW Health Water Unit.
- Mr Peter Marczan, Environment Protection Authority.

Outcomes

Table 2. Agenda items and outcomes.

Agenda item	Outcomes
1	Acknowledgement of country/welcome
2	Administrative matters <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Bill West confirmed that he has been advised that he can continue as the LGNSW until at least February 2022 (pending outcome of the local government elections). LGNSW will update the Panel after that time.• The following potential conflicts were declared:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ms Rebel Thomson declared that Namoi Unlimited and member councils are being funded by the Program for a trade waste collaboration pilot (see item 6).○ Ms Annalisa Contos declared that Atom Consulting has bid for a recently advertised contract with the Program in relation to Emergency management contract and is also working with Griffith City Council on its IWCM strategy pilot.○ The TWRRP team will make this a standing item on the SAP agenda. ACTION 11.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The TWRRP team to make declaration of conflicts a standing agenda item.

Agenda item	Outcomes
3	<p>Outcomes/actions from the previous meeting</p> <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 team noted one ongoing item regarding Crown Lands issues and recommended that this be removed from the outstanding actions list as liaison between DPIE Water and DPIE Crown lands is ongoing. Further updates will be provided directly to Graham Kennett, who raised the issues. The Panel agreed with this course of action but the following was also noted:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ One panel member raised an example of the impact of Crown Land processes on the Wyangala Dam treatment plant design. The Water Directorate is aware of other examples where DPIE Crown Lands processes have an impact on local water utilities.○ Glen Colley to contact Cllr Bill West and Brendan Guiney to discuss further.○ It was requested that the TWRRP team send Panel members the link to Crown Land Commissioner's July 2021 report on the implementation of the Crown Land Management Act. <p>ACTION 11.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Glen Colley to contact Cllr Bill West and Brendan Guiney to discuss examples of Crown Lands cultural issues impacting water planning and operations. <p>ACTION 11.3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- TWRRP team to send Crown Land Commissioner's July report to Panel members.

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Co-regulator approach – Discussion

- The TWRRP team provided an update on how the program is working with co-regulators to improve how co-regulators work together and with local water utilities.
- The overview included a summary of co-regulator participation in the Program, the new Co-regulator Forum, and the expected features of a co-regulator commitment to local water utilities, which will include values and principles, roles and responsibilities and ongoing, regular meetings.

GUIDANCE:

- Panel members were supportive of the proposed approach, noting that it is a key priority to get this implemented as soon as possible.
- It was requested that the TWRRP team and Co-regulator Forum consider “accessibility” as a key co-regulator value, recognising that LWUs want to be assured that they can contact regulators early if they have specific issues.
- A Panel member expressed the view that they would like to see a customer focus statement included. This is a reflection of the key role of customers being who utilities and co-regulators are collaborating on the behalf of.
 - The TWRRP team confirmed the LWU sector objectives that will be included in the committed include reference to customers and communities. The LWU sector objectives are published in the Roadmap to an improved regulatory framework for local water utilities.
- A Panel member noted that utilities are looking for strategic direction from EPA and NSW Health (in relation to where they we want the sector and utilities to be in 5 to 10 years), as instinct from the current reactive approach.
- Members of the TWRRP team advised that they are going to a session hosted by Vicwater on Thursday 25 November which is using such an approach, to learn how we might adapt that for NSW.
- Further information was requested about the frequency of the proposed co-regulator meetings.
 - The TWRRP team advised that this was yet to be determined, and that other issues like the mechanics of meetings would be addressed as priorities.
- A Panel member noted that getting people to attend these meetings may be difficult in the longer term (after initial enthusiasm wears off)
 - The TWRRP team advised it would seek to address this through well designed governance arrangements and agendas, and advised that this is an issue the co-regulator group would consider further.
- It was noted that industry engagement is a key consideration. How do the co-regulators have ongoing, broader conversations with the industry to help frame decision making, for example a reference panel approach.
- It was suggested that an annual regulatory forum (involving co-regulators and councils) may be a good way to do improve communication and access, so LWUs can raise issues directly with the regulators. The Water Directorate advised that it would be very happy to be involved in hosting such a forum.
- The success of other regulator forums was discussed, including OLG’s Responsible Pet Ownership group which was noted as being a very positive vehicle for building common approaches to complex policy issues, allowing various stakeholders to air their diverse views, but also for allowing participants to better understand the drivers behind final government decisions.
- The TWRRP team committed to suggesting these ideas to the Co-regulator Forum at a future meeting.

Agenda item	Outcomes
	<p>ACTION 11.4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The TWRRP team to reflect the Panel’s feedback in the draft co-regulator agreement and proposed approach, for consideration by the Co-regulator Forum.
5	<p>Roadmap working groups – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team provided an overview of the progress of the Regulatory Roadmap working groups. • No additional comments were made, or guidance provided by the Panel.
6	<p>IWCM/IP&R integration - Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TWRRP team provided an update on the progress of this project to date, including consultation undertaken with councils and GMs. • The Panel was asked to consider how to implement IWCM/CSP/IP&R integration and emphasise the benefits of it being one framework from the point of view of GMs. • The Panel were also asked to consider the industry wants to tell Government should be the next phase of the TWRRP in terms of ensuring recommended changes are implemented. It was suggested that IWCM/IP&R is a really good example to focus on and that this is a conversation the TWRRP team will be leading with the Panel in 2022. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Panel advised that it was critical to help councillors and General Managers to understand the advantages of better integrated strategic water planning with the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Panel member suggested that Joint Organisation of Council meetings be used to get GMs and Mayors to have a short discussion about this at the start of new council terms (early 2022) to increase awareness of this issue prior to the next cycle of IP&R. ○ The TWRRP team noted that the councillor induction package developed by the Program will include specific information about integration of the water strategic planning framework and IP&R framework. • The Panel also noted that while it was sensible that this integration occurs in the next cycle of IP&R (post 1 July 2022) it is important to provide information to councils asap so that they start to the journey in the current round of IP&R. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It was suggested that the high level, short summary provided by OLG to councils in their recent IP&R training was a good example of something that could be provided to staff to build understanding of what needs to be done. The things you can do now to recognise IWCM / SBP framework into the ○ Just remember why you are doing your CSP to bring through your IWCM aspirations, and high-level aspirations, water and sewer in separate graphs, short level discussion of pricing and fees and charges. ○ It was noted that the summary Common Thread Consulting provided to Kyogle Council on the specific findings of its desktop review was really helpful in terms of thinking about the next iteration. ○ It was recommended that this be co-branded with OLG. The TWRRP team will talk to OLG about this with a view to getting information out in early February 2022. <p>ACTION 11.5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TWRRP team to talk to OLG about opportunities for co-branded resource to provide guidance to council staff on improving the integration of strategic water planning with IP&R.

Agenda item	Outcomes
7	<p>Regional collaboration – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TWRRP team provided an update on the progress of this project to date, including consultation undertaken and pilot projects proceeding and in development. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Panel member noted that the November SAP meeting presentation needs to be updated to include a reference that a clear value add for JOs or councils is a key driver for them to be involved in regional collaboration. A Panel member also noted that the regional collaboration pilots seem to be operationally focussed. It was recommended that the Program needs to focus on the bigger picture to ensure that pilots also cover strategic issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TWRRP team took this onboard but are having these conversations in other pilots. Thinking about longer terms strategic issue. <p>ACTION 11.6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TWRRP team to add to the key findings on regional collaboration (shared in the November Panel meeting presentation) that regional collaboration must have clear benefits (eg, reduced costs, increased resources or knowledge) for councils to decide it is worthwhile participating.
8	<p>Emergency incident management – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team provided an overview of the progress of this work. No additional comments were made, or guidance provided by the Panel.
9	<p>LGNSW Water conference – Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was noted that the LGNSW Water Conference will be held in Narrabri on 9 – 11 February 2022 All of the TWRRP team will be present as will Jim Bentley, Amanda Chadwick, Michael Blackmore and other members of the DPIE Water Utilities team. It is proposed to hold a breakfast on Thursday 10 February for Panel members, to allow for a face to face catch up. Clr Bill West (pending re-lection), Graham Kennett and Brendan Guiney advised that they are attending the conference and available. Other Panel members were asked to inform the TWRRP team if they are attending the conference and available. The TWRRP team will book an appropriate venue and advise Panel members in advance. <p>ACTION 11.7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel members to inform the TWRRP team if they are attending the LGNSW Water Management conference and available to attend breakfast on Thursday 10 February. <p>ACTION 11.8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TWRRP team will book an appropriate breakfast venue and advise Panel members in advance.

Agenda item	Outcomes
10	<p>Open data framework – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Micah Starkis – Director Data & Info Knowledge ICT & Data, DPIE - Water provided an update on this project. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Panel member asked if there has been any discussion of the LWU database for performance monitoring being made available? It was noted that the intention is that Open Data framework will provide an industry landing page indicating where to go to access data of this nature. A Panel member noted that a similar approach has been done before under the Community Access to Natural Resource Information initiative. A Panel member suggested that the most important gap to address is ensuring a strategic planning or collaborative framework for what data needs to be collected by LWUs in all their various roles (town water, emergency management etc). This needs to be considered in the broader context about what multiple agencies and LWUs need. A Panel member suggested that DPIE Water consider how the existing duplicated reporting to DPIE, NSW Health and EPA in urban water can be resolved.
11	<p>Implementation – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Blackmore provided an update on two issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Efficiency program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some collaboration has already taken place (for example with Central NSW Joint organisation of councils), with the first of a series of co-design workshops taking place in late November. It was also noted that good suggestions had been received from the Water Directorate in relation to how to engage with water utilities who do not often speak up. Increased resourcing within DPIE Water Utilities Team for assessment of IWCM strategies and provide support for LWU strategic planning: half the planned new recruitment has taken place already with staff commencing in the coming weeks. Further information will be provided about this at a future Panel meeting. Graham Attenborough provided an update on the DPIE Water incident management framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant staff across water will be trained by March 2022 in DPIE Water’s incident management framework. TWRRP will be invited to participate as well. DPIE Water is working with the Water Directorate to determine how guidance and support for safety management can be provided to LWUs. <p>ACTION 11.9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Blackmore to provide an update on increased resources and changes to the approach to assessment of strategic planning (IWCM strategies) between now and 1 July 2022.
12	<p>Panel items for discussion – No items were raised.</p>

Agenda item	Outcomes
13	<p>Next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be held Wednesday 15 December 2021 – 9.30am start. The TWRRP team will send Panel members a copy of the draft councillor induction documents for comment before the meeting. There will not be a January 2022 Panel meeting.

Actions arising from 24 November 2021 meeting

Table 3. Summary of actions.

Item no.	Action	Responsibility	Due date
11.1	Make declaration of conflicts a standing agenda item.	TWRRP Team	15 December 2021
11.2	Contact Clr Bill West and Brendan Guiney to discuss specific examples of Crown Lands cultural issues impacting water planning and operations	Glen Colley	15 December 2021
11.3	Send Crown Land Commissioner's July report to Panel members	TWRRP team	26 November 2021
11.4	Reflect the Panel's feedback in the draft co-regulator agreement and proposed approach.	TWRRP team	3 December 2021
11.5	Talk to OLG about opportunities for co-branded resource to provide guidance to council staff on improving the integration of strategic water planning with IP&R.	TWRRP team	15 December 2021
11.6	Add to the key findings on regional collaboration in the November SAP presentation that a clear value add for JOs or councils is a key driver for them to be involved in regional collaboration	TWRRP team	26 November 2021
11.7	Panel members to inform the TWRRP team if they are attending the LGNSW Water conference and available for a SAP breakfast on Thursday 10 February.	Panel members	3 December 2021
11.8	Book an appropriate venue for the SAP breakfast and advise Panel members in advance.	TWRRP team	3 December 2021
11.9	Provide an update on increased resources and changes to the approach to assessment of strategic planning (IWCM strategies) between now and 1 July 2022.	Michael Blackmore	February 2022 meeting

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