

Town Water Risk Reduction Program—Outcomes and action items

Meeting 15 | 27 April 2022, 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, DPE – Water • Mr Aaron Drenovski, Goldenfields Water • Dr Katrina Wall, NSW Health Water Unit. • Mr Peter Marczan, Manager Technical Assessments & Advice, Environment Protection Authority • Ms Erin Cini – Director Town Water Risk Reduction Program (Chair) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Amanda Chadwick, Executive Director Performance, DPE Water • Ms Carmel Krogh, Independent Advisor to DPE Water • Ms Jenny Bennett, Central NSW Joint Organisation • Ms Clare Ferguson, Aither Pty Ltd (Item 6) • Mr Ben Smith, Aither Pty Ltd (Item 6) 	<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 • Ms Sonya Cochrane (Secretariat)

Apologies

- Ms Rebel Thomson, Namoi Unlimited Joint Organisation of Councils (represented in the meeting by Ms Jenny Bennett, Central NSW Joint Organisation)
- Ms Melissa Gibbs, Office of Local Government
- Dr Annalisa Contos, Atom Consulting
- Mr Graham Kennett, Kyogle Council
- Mr David Kirby, Brewarrina Shire Council

Outcomes

Table 2. Agenda items and outcomes.

Agenda item	Outcomes
1	Acknowledgement of country and meeting welcome
2	<p>Administrative matters- Declarations of conflicts of interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clr Bill West – Cowra Shire Council – Strategic Planning pilot • Ms Annalisa Contos – Atom Consulting – Griffith City Council Strategic Planning pilot, incident and emergency management project • Ms Jenny Bennett – Central NSW Joint Organisation Strategic Planning pilot
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. • There were no outstanding actions. However, it was noted that the action item relating to a briefing on secure yield/water security and planning work being undertaken by the department is due in May 2022, and will be provided by the Director Water Utilities at the May Stakeholder Advisory Panel meeting
4	<p>Draft regulatory framework update</p> <p>The TWRRP team provided an update on the working draft, noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changes being made to reflect changes in the regulatory framework, including internal processes and reporting, clarification of strategic planning outcomes, linking dividend payments assessment and approval to effective strategic planning; section 60 application processes, and monitoring reporting • The regulatory framework requires approval by the Minister for Water, briefing to the Minister planned for the end of May/early June, with implementation from 1 July 2022. Some components must be gazetted for commencement 1 July 2022. <p>GUIDANCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clr Bill West, Local Government NSW, expressed concerns about the possible risks from the short time frame for the finalisation of the framework and that the 1 July 2022 deadline doesn't allow for enough consultation on the final product. <p>The department's Executive Director Performance acknowledged Clr West's concerns and noted that the timeframes have always been a recognised risk. A variation to this deadline has been considered however the 1 July 2022 timeframe puts the program in the strongest position for successful implementation. To manage identified risks, strategies were put in place at the outset of the program. These include the deliberate design of the consultation process to be as open as possible, with as much engagement as possible and adapting as the program evolved. In addition to the collaboration to design the draft regulatory framework, public consultation is underway. In addition, frameworks and guidance material is being developed with consideration to the timeframes for implementation purposes.</p>

Agenda item	Outcomes
5	<p>Implementation – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department’s Director Water Utilities provided an update on work that Water Utilities team is undertaking on the changes needed to implement the actions arising from the Town Water Risk Reduction Program. The TWRRP team confirmed that the measurement and evaluation of success of the implementation will be achieved through a quality assurance framework that holds the department to account. This is being developed by Nous and will be presented at the next meeting. Outcome focused regulation is a new approach for the department and sector, and will mean a new flexible and adaptive way that local water utilities will interact with the department, using the guidance being developed. While new for Water, it’s not new in other functions of councils, OLG for example takes this approach. Key to its success is the department working with the water directorate, LGNSW and local water utilities with flexibility and conversation. <p>GUIDANCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was suggested that local water utilities and the department need clarity on how an outcome focussed regulatory framework will be regulated and communicated. The department recognises the need to get implementation right and ensure that changes are future proof. <p>ACTION ITEM 15.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TWRRP team will present an overview of the Quality Assurance Framework at the May meeting.
6	<p>TWRRP Program evaluation – Update</p> <p>Aither Pty Ltd has been engaged to evaluate the Town Water Risk Reduction Program. The final evaluation report is due in August 2022. Aither reported on the concept and assessment of the program, assessing outcomes to program deliverables over a five-year period.</p> <p>GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was suggested Panel members be involved in the design of the survey and interview questions. Aither requested comments on the conceptual framework and the proposed questions be submitted by close of business Friday 29 April. Survey participants will be selected to ensure a diversity and broad cross-section of responses. Survey and interview questions will be informed by the extensive stakeholder feedback received to date. The department’s Executive Director Performance will meet with Aither directly but noted the concept of risk needs to be integrated within the logic. A Panel member suggested the TWRRP’s final recommendations include strategies to incentivise councils to work regionally, not only within joint organisations but more broadly. In response to feedback, TWRRP will consider how key risks, such as water security, skills and training can be better integrated in the evaluation framework. <p>ACTION ITEM 15.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel members are to provide comments on the conceptual framework and the proposed questions by close of business Friday 29 April.

Agenda item	Outcomes
7	<p>Regional collaboration pilots – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TWRRP team provided an update on the progress of the strategic planning pilots (IWCM strategies). <p>GUIDANCE A member of the Panel suggested, and it was agreed, that the finalised Central NSW Joint Organisation would be valuable information for the members of the Intergovernmental Advisory Panel.</p>
8	<p>Operator training – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TWRRP team provided an update on the progress of the program’s operator training work.
9	<p>Councillor support – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TWRRP team provided an update on the progress of program’s councillor support work, including councillor videos and the councillor induction webinar on water hosted by OLG on 23 April 2022. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was noted that, while the councillor induction webinar was very informative and well received, attendees included existing councillors who were already engaged on water issues. More should be done to increase the aware of councillors not engaged on water issues. A Panel member suggested a Roadshow or on the ground training would be useful as a follow up to the councillor webinar.
10	<p>Water NSW pilots – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TWRRP team and Water NSW provided an update on three pilots being undertaken by Water NSW in collaboration with various local water utilities in relation to: dam safety, river operations, and catchment management. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Panel member noted the South-East Victoria project on water quality involving Albury City Council and the need to monitor for impact/intersections it will have on WaterNSW river operations pilot involving Hay and Murrumbidgee. The Water Directorate advised that its Executive meeting is being held 5 May 2022 and issues about how data is supplied to downstream councils will be raised, which is relevant to the river operations pilot. A Panel member suggested a one-page overview of the WaterNSW river water qualities would be useful for training and communication purposes within councils. <p>ACTION ITEM 15.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TWRRP to prepare a one-page overview of the WaterNSW river water qualities and load it onto the TWRRP web page.

Agenda item	Outcomes
11	<p>Panel items for discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further items were raised
12	<p>Next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next SAP Meeting is 25 May 2022, and will include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TWRRP quality assurance framework Draft regulatory framework feedback update. Briefing by the Director Water Utilities on secure yield/water security and planning work being undertaken by the department.

Actions arising from 27 April 2022 meeting

Table 3. Summary of actions.

No	Action	Responsibility	Due date	Status
14.1	Talk to Graham Kennett about possible inclusion of Rous Water in WaterNSW catchment pilot	Glen Colley	27 April 2022	Complete
14.2	The TWRRP team will update the draft regulatory framework to note that while the Panel and other consultation groups collaborated to design the draft regulatory framework, the document is not endorsed by those groups.	Erin Cini	31 March 2022	Complete
14.3	Provide a briefing on secure yield/water security and planning work being undertaken by the department at the May SAP meeting	Director Water Utilities	25 May 2022	Pending
14.4	Include an update on operator training in next SAP meeting agenda.	TWRRP team	20 April 2022	Complete
15.1	Provide a presentation on the Quality assurance framework.	TWRRP team	25 May 2022	Pending
15.2	Panel members to provide comments on the conceptual framework and the proposed questions proposed by Aither by close of business Friday 29 April 2022.	Panel members	29 April 2022	Pending

No	Action	Responsibility	Due date	Status
15.3	TWRRP to prepare a one-page overview of the WaterNSW river water qualities document and place on web page	TWRRP team	25 May 2022	Pending

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