

Town Water Risk Reduction Program—Outcomes and action items

Meeting 3 | 24 March 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 • Ms Meredith McPherson Central West Joint Organisation of Councils • Leslie Jarvis, NSW Health Water Unit • Mr Peter Marczan, Environment Protection Authority • Mr Michael Blackmore, Director Local Water Utilities, DPIE – Water • Mr Aaron Drenovski, Goldenfields Water (County Council member) • Mr Graham Kennett, Kyogle Council (LWU General Manager member) • 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 Melissa Gibbs, Director Policy & Sector Development, OLG • Ms Amanda Chadwick, Executive Director Water Sector Reform, DPIE – Water • Jane Blakeney – DPIE Water Comms 	<p>Town Water Risk Reduction Program team members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sascha Moege • Nanda Altavilla • Josh Tickell • Padraic Gidney • Glen Colley (Secretariat)

Apologies

- Ms Rebel Thompson, Executive Officer Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils
- Dr Katrina Wall, NSW Health Water Unit
- Mr David Kirby, Brewarrina Shire Council (LWU manager)
- Dr Annalisa Contos, Atom consulting (Consultant representative)
- Mr Luke Walton, Executive Director Planning Policy, DPIE – Planning & Assessment.

Outcomes

Table 2. Agenda items and outcomes.

Agenda item	Outcomes
1	<p>Acknowledgement of country/welcome</p> <p>N/A</p>
2	<p>Outcomes/actions from the previous meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Panel received a briefing on the outcomes and actions from the previous meeting, which were accepted. <p>ACTION 3.1: TWRRP Team to add Mural link into the meeting agenda template</p>
3	<p>Proposed approach to delivery (collaboration)</p> <p>Overview and Central JO feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meredith McPherson of Central JO provided feedback on behalf of Rebel Thompson form Namoi JO on the issue of successful collaboration. The main issues raised are summarised in the guidance section below. • The TWRRP team confirmed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the focussed teams / working group approach aims to address this ○ they are currently developing ideas about the governance and approach to working groups and will report back to the Panel with more info. <p>GUIDANCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central JO collaboration feedback: • In relation to successful collaboration it is recommended that the TWRRP program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure the following attributes are met: mutual understanding of complexity and opportunities, common language, understanding of parties’ capabilities and expertise, responsiveness and communication, mutual respect and trust. ○ be clear about identifying outcomes to maintain the focus of groups and focus areas ○ articulate connections to short term and longer-term issues. ○ leverage existing and planned activities – include known and willing stakeholders. ○ recognise that there already established partnerships and leverage these ○ test policies in the real world to make sure they are fit for purpose (experience during the drought supports this). • Easy wins should be addressed first, particularly in relation to leveraging collaboration approaches that already exist and are working. <p>Working groups and focussed teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TWRRP team provided an overview of the proposed approach to collaboration, which includes a distinction between:

Agenda item	Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ focussed teams - a short term collaboration approach for issues where the partners are known and agreed, and ○ working groups – a longer term for big, difficult issues with many participating stakeholders ● The focussed teams and working groups would undertake testing of ideas and proposed approaches through: workshops, issues papers, draft documents etc which would embrace the views of a wider group/diverse stakeholders. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is important not to discount the role of JO's in this space as collaboration is a key part of their role. ● The Program should find a way to support LGNSW to help them to get LWUS and councils more engaged in these conversations, by making sure the right people are in the room in working groups, focussed teams and testing. ● The Panel will need to understand the deliverables for each priority actions before it can provide advice on who should be involved in the delivery itself. Work out the outcomes we need to deliver. ● As an example of the above, it was suggested that DPIE Water could put all the IWCM and section 60 matters that are pending out in a document for the sector to comment on. ● The use of pilots should be included in the testing process in the collaboration proposal. ● It will be important to ensure collaborative groups are not agency heavy.
4	<p>Proposed priority actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The TWRRP team provided a briefing on the proposed priority actions (based on initial feedback from the Panel and other recent engagement): <p>WORKSTREAM 1: Improve the regulatory framework (TWRRP lead: Sascha Moege)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The following priority actions are proposed under this workstream: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Existing IWCM and s60 pipeline - DPIE Water will update the sector about reform direction, especially for LWUs currently undertaking IWCM strategies and s60 applications. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A IWCM position statement is being prepared by the Department. It was noted that some councils are worried that the goal posts are going to change so they are reluctant to engage (or worried that they will need to start again or lose their funding). ▪ Councils shouldn't be encouraged to park IWCM work too quickly as there are political imperatives (eg. Water pricing). This was acknowledged and it was suggested that parts of an IWCM might be parked instead of the whole thing ○ Immediate actions that to improve transparency of IWCM and section 60 processes.

- Prioritised actions to address Audit Office report
- Establish a working group to commence detailed co-design on longer term regulatory improvements (IWCM, Section 60 etc).
- Co-regulators work together to identify how to collaborate and communicate more effectively with each other and LWUs/local councils.

GUIDANCE

- It was noted that EPA currently has a draft regulatory strategy out for consultation. Peter Marczan will share the slide pack and make enquires about whether EPA can present to the SAP and Water Directorate.

ACTION 3.2 - Peter Marczan will share the slide pack presented by EPA on its review of its regulatory process and liaise with the relevant EPA officer about presenting to the Panel and the Water Directorate Executive.

WORKSTREAM 2: Encourage collaboration between LWUs (TWRRP lead: Glen Colley)

- There are no priority actions proposed for this workstream at this time. However, the TWRRP team is developing options and will bring further information to the April 2021 Panel meeting for discussion.

WORKSTREAM 3: Review of skills and training (TWRRP lead: Paddy Gidney)

Councillor awareness and training

- The following priority actions are proposed under this sub-workstream:
 - Develop councillor survey in consultation with OLG, LGNSW, and Water Directorate.
 - Review Water Directorate Councillor information package with OLG, LGNSW, Dam Safety, EPA and NSW Health.
 - Include information in OLG pre-candidate information and post-election councillor induction materials.
 - A proposed focussed team be convened to lead this work, comprising: OLG, Water Directorate, LGNSW and DPIE Water.
- It was noted that the Water Directorate's water literacy for councillors information package has been distributed by the TWRRP to the relevant regulatory agencies (OLG, NSW Health, EPA, DPIE Water and Dam Safety) for comment. However, the Panel requested that this also be distributed to Panel members for review.
- Panel members were asked to focus on the content and think about possible delivery methods. However, the TWRRP team will be seeking further feedback from the Panel on the latter after the issue has been further considered it).

GUIDANCE

- Elected members need to be involved in development of councillor awareness and education tool
- It was noted that LGNSW also has a training and learning team that can help package and pitch these materials to elected members.

ACTION 3.3 – TWRRP team to send the Water Directorate councillor water literacy information to the Panel.

Access to operator training

- The following priority actions are proposed under this sub-workstream:
 - VET for operators - continued discussions with Training Services NSW.
 - Build on existing workforce development analysis with partners.
 - A proposed focussed team be convened to lead this work, comprising: Training Services NSW, Water Directorate, LGNSW, Central NSW JO, WIOA (Water Industry Operators Association), OLG and DPIE Water
- The TWRRP will come back to the Panel with more on this at the April meeting.

GUIDANCE

- **It was recommended that the Public Service Industry Training Advisory Board be added to the focussed team.**

WORKSTREAM 4: Connecting LWUs with State Government (TWRRP leads: Nanda Altavilla and Josh Tickell)

- The following priority actions are proposed for this workstream:
 - Work with sector to test ideas to strengthen non-commercial and commercial arrangements for support
 - Identify what water utilities might want from SOCs if barriers were removed
 - Identify what SOCs might want to provide to LWUs if barriers were removed
 - Identify how to build trust
- It was acknowledged the Panel's view that PWA need to be involved.
- TWRRP team are intending to hold a workshop to flesh some of this out (then develop a position paper for comment).
- It was also acknowledged that there are things that LWUs can provide (knowledge wise) to the SOCS as well.

GUIDANCE

- It was suggested that:
 - DPIE Water needs to acknowledge that the work is being done to address the Audit Office recommendation regarding developing a policy framework amongst the co-regulators – it will give comfort to the sector. It was also noted that this will be addressed as part of the regulatory framework work and that TWRRP team has commenced working with the DPIE cluster co regulators on a better approach.
 - the Program develop a position paper that outlines the capacity of SOCS and PWA to support LWUS (what expertise and capacity do they have) but also what do LWUs want from them. Dam safety is an obvious area for longer term support. Training is another area for collaboration between SOCS
 - the Program also look at how LWUs are supporting each other (through WD and otherwise) which is part of a separate focus area (but not raised in this meeting because it wasn't identified as a priority area at the last SAP meeting).
 - the TWRRP team look at PWA's approach to current floods – build back better. Acknowledged that this is another example of resilience in councils and communities.
 - a MOU approach between LWUs and SOCs may be appropriate.

WORKSTREAM 5: Investigate alternate funding models (TWRRP lead: Erin Cini)

- The following priority actions are proposed for this workstream in the context of a plan for joined up sectoral recommendation to be made by late 2022

Agenda item	Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ targeted conversations with sector in the short term. ○ Planning for scoping and options identification of potential funding models ● It was noted that, while this was not identified as a priority at the last SAP meeting it is something we need to start as it is longer term in nature. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An early deliverable here might be outline what the rules are now and what the current situation is.
5	<p>What does success look like by the end of 2022?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A discussion was held in relation to how the Program should develop measures of success and what these measures should be. ● The TWRRP team advised that it is fleshing out deliverables for each focus area as part of a “plans on a page” process in the next few weeks and will consider the feedback provided by the Panel in relation to developing initial measures of success. <p>GUIDANCE:</p> <p>The following points were raised in the discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transparency is a key issue and regulators talking to one another. ● The program should consider what measures we use to assess whether risk has been reduced. ● Need to know the extent of the risk before we measure success. Eg. Safe and Secure Water Program is only somewhat useful (only considers a subset of risks and is primarily for the purpose of funding) and must be signed off by LWUS as being accurate. And then decide how we apply that data (or additional data) for the purpose of risk mitigations. The program can do this by looking in more detail about the root causes of the risk we are trying to address. ● There is a need for good, accurate data which feeds into IWCMs. ● Success also looks like having relevant and meaningful training and someone to call for support. Has been trying to do some benchmarking. ● Success also relates to the intelligence we capture around IWCM planning. Review of the process for actions planning based on LWU performance data. ● If the TWRRP Program can produce some good resources and tools to support governance and collaboration that at the end of 2 years will be a good short-term win. ● Important that the Program doesn't spend more time talking about how we are going to measure things, at the expense of just getting things done. ● The Program could, for example, run a pilot on a particular issue and measure change over time as part of that. With a view to learning from these beyond the two-year timeframe of the TWRRP and answering the question - do we think that success can be replicated, going forward beyond 2022?

Agenda item	Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One size does not fit all in terms of managing success. Need to engage with individual LWUs to determine what success means to them. • In some ways it is too early to determine what success will look like in 2022. It is better to determine what it will look like in the short term (next 3 or 4 months). • The Program also needs to recognise the importance of measuring the existing relationships and interactions between individual LWUs and other agencies or other groups. • Has the risk of running out of water been considered in any of this? • Success definition will evolve in the coming months. It needs to be an ongoing conversation. Getting things done is a priority.
6	<p>Next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be held Wednesday 28 April 2021 – 9.30am start. • Key topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ more specific deliverables are under each focus areas. ○ clarity about longer-term deliverables. ○ Working groups processes and governance. • Notes of this meeting will be distributed in 1 week (by 31 March) and the next meeting agenda will be distributed 1 week prior to the next meeting (21 April). • The TWRRP team will also keep the Panel up to date out of session on any major updates and actions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EPA offer of presentation ○ Sharing the Water Directorate’s councillor training materials ○ Any area urgent views of the Panel are required. • Members were encouraged to use Mural board to keep providing feedback between meetings but also emails.

Actions arising from 24 February 2021 meeting

Table 3. Summary of actions.

Item no.	Action	Responsibility	Due date
2.1	Hold further discussions with Mayor West about the what he wishes he had known re urban water service management when first elected.	TWRRP team	By next meeting (24 March 2021)
2.2	Update Terms of Reference to reflect the Panel's views on concurrence regarding records of meeting outcomes.	TWRRP team	24 March 2021
2.3	Update/modify program fact sheet to include less bureaucratic/paternalistic language and provide this to the Panel for comment.	TWRRP team	24 March 2021
2.4	Resend the slides relating to proposed focus areas to reflect updated information.	TWRRP team	12 March 2021
2.5	Commence discussions about pre-candidate and councillor induction training with LGNSW, OLG, DPIE Water and the Water Directorate.	TWRRP team	31 March 2021
2.6	Distribute the Water Directorate's water literacy for councillors document to LGNSW, OLG, DPIE Water for comment.	TWRRP team	24 March 2021
2.7	Consider the feedback of the Panel regarding prioritisation and come back to the Panel with further information about options to progress early wins and next steps.	TWRRP team	24 March 2021
2.8	Talk with Central West JO about good examples of collaboration and report back to the Panel.	Rebel Thompson	24 March 2021
2.9	Provide further information to the Panel about how working groups are proposed to operate (particularly in relation to the focus areas that we want to start on earlier, coming out of today's discussion).	TWRRP team	24 March 2021

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