

MACALISTER CUSTOMER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF MEETING 191
Held 10.00am Tuesday 26 April 2022
SRW, Maffra**

PRESENT

Mrs Raelene Hanratty, Chair
Mr Benn Thexton, Deputy Chair
Mr Norm Drew
Ms Kate Lamb
Mr Alan Clyne
Mr Graeme Anderson, OAM

SRW Representatives

Mr Cameron FitzGerald, Managing Director
Mr Hugh Christie, General Manager Service Delivery
Mr Simon Wilkinson, Manager Water Supply
Mr Craig Smith, Manager Strategy and Business Planning
Mrs Pamela Crawford, Customer Relations Officer

APOLOGIES

Mrs Jeannette Howie
Mr Brad White
Mr Malcolm Sellen
Ms Joanne Butterworth-Gray, SRW Board Chair

2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES; AGENDA LISTING

The Chair opened the meeting by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land and waters of the MID.

The chair informed the Committee that both Malcolm Sellen and Robert Webber have resigned from the Committee. The Chair thanked both members for their contribution.

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

Recommendation to have a register attached to the agenda with members interests listed which can be referred to throughout the meeting.

Action – Mrs Crawford to co-ordinate the creation of a Conflict of Interest table for the agenda.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on **Tuesday 22 February 2022**.

Moved: Mr A Clyne **Seconded:** Mrs K Lamb

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Meeting	Agenda Item #	Action	Action Officer	Status
<i>Sept</i>	<i>7.5</i>	<i>SRW to work with Mr Clyne in the development of a workshop.</i>	<i>Wilkinson/Crawford/Clyne</i>	<i>Complete</i>
<i>Oct</i>	<i>6.3</i>	<i>The MCCC chair to develop a letter to be sent to the Minister, with Committee input, regarding Board appointments.</i>	<i>Hanratty</i>	<i>Complete</i>
<i>Feb</i>	<i>6.4</i>	<i>A copy of the allocation presentation will be circulated to the committee along with the meeting documents.</i>	<i>Crawford</i>	<i>Complete</i>

6. PRINCIPAL MATTERS

6.1 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- The Chair provided a report that included:
 - The development of the new SRW website and her involvement in the working group.
 - A letter to The Honourable Lisa Neville MP that was developed and sent to DELWP. A copy was attached to the agenda papers.
 - Mrs Hanratty discussed the complexity of where to direct the letter given the multiple levels of structure in DELWP.
 - Mrs Hanratty also recently toured Mr Drew's farm which was insightful to see how operations work in different parts of the Macalister Irrigation Area.

6.2 SIGNIFICANT ISSUES OR ACTIONS

- There are no significant current issues or actions.

6.3 MATTERS REFERRED BY THE BOARD

- Mr FitzGerald informed the Committee that Ms Butterworth-Gray was an apology for the current meeting and the May meeting due to pre-existing commitments before taking her role at SRW. The MCCC requested that consideration be given to the potential of an alternate Board representative coming to the MCCC meeting if the nominated attendee was not available.
- Mr FitzGerald reported that the Pricing Submission is the core matter for the Board presently, together with the current Enterprise Agreement discussions with SRW staff.
- The Committee received an update on the progress of awarding the Newry-Nuntin Phase 2 works. Negotiations with the preferred contractor are continuing with a focus being an agreement on pricing of pipe materials which is being impacted by the availability and price of raw materials overseas.
- SRW has communicated with Newry and Nuntin customers that current irrigation infrastructure will remain in place to provide water into the next irrigation season.

6.4 MANAGER WATER SUPPLY UPDATE

- Mr Simon Wilkinson, Manager Water Supply led discussions, including:
 - Glenmaggie release strategy
 - The storage level has been dropped the sill level for flood mitigation purposes and in recognition that it is forecast to be a wet winter/spring period.
 - The Committee queried who is consulted and what information is used when making these decisions. Mr Wilkinson responded saying that SRW uses best available data from the BOM and internal data sets. SRW consults both internal Headworks engineers and external stakeholders including the CMA.
 - It was also queried why doesn't the community know how much water has gone down the river and out to sea. This was seen as a good opportunity for community education. Mr Wilkinson agreed to follow up and ascertain the volume of water.
 - Water trading and utilisation project
 - A workshop will be held on 17th May.

6.5 WINTER WORKS PROGRAM

- The Winter Works Program paper was noted by the Committee.

6.6 FEBRUARY MCCC WORKSHOP WRAP UP

- The Committee were invited to share their feedback and insights from the February workshop.
- Mr Wilkinson advised that discussion papers from the workshop will be developed into a publication that can be used for MCCC member induction as well as distribution to a broader base. The MCCC will be able to review the document before circulation.
- The Committee provided the following workshop feedback:
 - Ms Lamb – said it was great to share knowledge and listen to developments. There was a lot of emotion in the room, a beautiful day to be a part of.
 - Mr Thexton – said the session was good to get a look at the future needs. The history aspect is good for a benchmark but nothing to do with future.
 - Mr Drew stated that the MIA is “one regulated district” and it is important that this is recognised by the MCCC.
 - SRW acknowledged the MIA is one regulated system and all customers include both those connected to the irrigation channel system and those who receive water via regulation of the Macalister and Thomson rivers, will be treated equally.
 - It was commented that we can learn from the past, but we can't change it. The documents from the workshop will be pulled together as a succinct pack and circulated to the Committee before being published.
 - Mr Drew requested a definition, including a map, of the Thomson Macalister system. The whole system as one. It was agreed that this would be included in the summary pack.
 - My Clyne said it was a very successful workshop that is going to set us up for the next couple of decades at least. Should have a review clause on the document produced for every 5 years.
 - Mr Anderson – Interested to see finalised documents. Was a great, well-run workshop.

- Mrs Hanratty said the workshop was informative and got a lot out of it. Thought some things weren't in the reading material but upon re-reading the papers, they were found to be there.
 - Mr FitzGerald said he got a lot out of the workshop the purpose of which was to draw a line in the sand on where we have been and set ourselves up for the future. Mr FitzGerald also acknowledged Mr Wilkinson's efforts in organising the workshop.
 - Mr Christie echoed Mr FitzGerald's acknowledgement of Mr Wilkinson's efforts and said there was value in the session for the organisation as a whole as it provided a common understanding between the committee and staff.
 - It was also commented that we need to move forward and attract people to the Committee. This provides a platform for renewal of the committee.
- **ACTION - Mr Wilkinson to include a definition and map of the Thomson Macalister system in the MCCC workshop pack.**

6.7 PRICING SUBMISSION

- Mr Craig Smith, Manager Strategy and Business Planning joined the meeting to discuss the Pricing submission and to gauge committee members feedback on the information which will be presented to the broader customer base.
 - Mr Smith spoke to the presentation which covered pricing, engagement and consultation.
 - The recent survey conducted provided some good background information on the key issues customers want SRW to consider.
 - The Committee were presented with proposed pricing pathways that were informed by key inputs including:
 - The 25 year capital plan and financial model
 - Collated feedback from recent customer engagements and stakeholder discussions
 - Future regulatory requirements, compliance activities and initiatives
 - Outcomes from the SRW Board strategy workshop
- The Committee discussed the presentation and proposed pricing that will form the next phase of engagement with customers. The highlights from the discussion included:
 - A need to be clear on the list of proposed Capex projects for each option.
 - Impact on accounts could be shown in a different slide.
 - Concern that customers may not understand information and to be clear and concise with information.
 - Further need to take into consideration risk.
 - The impact with and without CPI isn't substantial.
 - The impact auction vs distribution of water savings from modernisation has on prices
 - Consideration on the impact changes of industry type will have on how much water is used.
 - Need to find a balance with options. Perhaps SRW will need to consider a blend of the options presented.
- There was discussion about the importance of making a decision on whether to allocate water savings across the customer base or to undertake auctions. There were mixed views on the matter:

- There was some support for allocations of water savings on the basis that this puts more water in the hands of farmers without need for upfront capital investment.
- An alternative position was presented that auction puts water where it is needed and avoids the risk of people “sitting on” unused water.
- There was also a discussion about whether all irrigators needed additional water, with individuals expressing a range of positions from needing water, to having adequate water and preferring to minimise upward pressure on fees and charges.

SRW members present highlighted that auctions are preferred by the Minister for Water, but that all customer feedback would be considered as a part of the development of the price submission. Mr FitzGerald stated categorically that if an allocation was to occur then all customers in the Macalister Irrigation Area would be able to participate. To avoid doubt, all customers include both those connected to the irrigation channel system and those who receive water via regulation of the Macalister and Thomson rivers.

- The Committee were informed of drop-in information sessions which will take place in May 2022 for the boarder customer base. Mr Smith agreed to forward the information session date and time to the Committee.

7.0 FOR NOTING

7.1 CORRESPONDENCE

- The Committee noted the letter to The Honourable Lisa Neville MP, from the MCCC.

7.2 FEEDBACK REGISTER (RELEVANT TO MID)

- The Committee noted that there was no feedback relevant to the MID since the last meeting.

7.3 COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

- The Committee noted that there was no Communications report.

8.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

- In camera sessions
 - The Committee discussed the potential use of “in camera” sessions with those members present agreeing they did not think the Committee required them.
 - It was suggested that if the occasion arose the Committee could request it and SRW Management supported this. It was agreed that it would be used on an “as needed” basis.
- Mr FitzGerald took the following questions on notice and will report back at the next Committee meeting:
 - Superannuation on sitting fees.

- Use of bollards at Cowwarr weir and concern they will cause debris build up in the next flood. Mr FitzGerald agreed to discuss with SRW Engineers.

9.0 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting No. 192 of the Macalister Customer Consultative Committee is scheduled for 10.00 am on Tuesday 24 May 2022.

Meeting	Date
MCCC 192	Tuesday, 24 th May 2022
MCCC 193	Tuesday, 26 th July 2022
MCCC 194	Tuesday, 27 th September 2022
MCCC 195	Tuesday, 25 th October 2022
MCCC 196	Tuesday, 13 th December 2022

10.0 MEETING CLOSE

With there being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.37pm.

	July 2021	Sept 2021	Oct 2021	Dec 2021	Feb 2022	April 2022	May 2022	July 2022	Sept 2022	Oct 2022	Dec 2022
Raelene Hanratty	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Graeme Anderson	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apol	✓					
Stephen Dwyer	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apol						
Jeanette Howie	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apol					
Norm Drew	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Malcolm Sellen	Apol	✓	✓	✓	Apol	Apol					
Alan Clyne	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Robert Webber	✓	✓	✓	Apol	Apol	N/A					
Kate Lamb	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Brad White	Apol	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apol					
Benn Thexton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					

- ✓ Attended Meeting
- Apol Notification of apology
- Blank Did not attend

