

**GIPPSLAND AND SOUTHERN RURAL WATER CORPORATION
SOUTHERN GROUNDWATER and RIVERS FORUM**

MINUTES of MEETING 47

Held 10.30am, Friday 2 December 2022

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:

Mr Ross Ingram	Chair
Ms Josie Zilm	Forum member, Deputy Chair
Mr Daniel Hammond	Forum member
Mr Stephen Marshall	Forum member
Mr Matt Gleeson	Forum member
Mr Damian Moore	Forum member
Mr Kevin Stark	Forum member
Mr Norm Drew	Forum member
Mr Daniel Toohey	Forum member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Jane Doolan	Board Director, SRW
Mr Cameron FitzGerald	Managing Director, SRW
Mr Simon Wilkinson	General Manager Service Delivery, SRW
Mr Bryce Morden	Manger Groundwater and Rivers, SRW
Ms Hayley Taylor	Executive Assistant, SRW (Scribe)

APOLOGIES:

Mr Bruce Vallance	Forum member
Mr Tom Wallace	Forum member

GUESTS:

Anthony Goode	West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
Shayne Haywood	West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
Christine Reid	Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority
Chris Solum	Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority
Sarah Killury	Agriculture Victoria
Omi Koulas	Consultant - Struber
Bill Hansen	Consultant - Struber
Matt Hudson	Principle Hydrogeologist

Due to the Customer Engagement Review Workshop, agenda items were not discussed in order.

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which the meeting was held.

2 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

The Chair **noted** the apologies and acknowledged that a few members were running late.

Dr Doolan advised that she would need to leave the meeting at 12pm.

3 DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair asked attendees to declare any conflicts of interest relating to the business of this meeting.

There were no new conflicts raised.

4 CONFIRMATION MINUTES

The minutes No. 46 held on 2 September 2022 were **approved**.

Moved: Josie Zilm

Seconded: Ross Ingram

5 BUSINESS ARISING

The report was taken as read.

Mr Ingram stated he was happy with the way minutes have been distributed.

6 GUEST SPEAKERS

6.1 Irrigation Development Guideline

Mr Anthony Goode, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) provided an overview of the Irrigation Development Guidelines for Gippsland and the Southwest.

The following points were highlighted within the Gippsland Irrigation Development Guidelines (IDGs) presentation:

- Historical and inefficient practices can be detrimental to the environment and long-term viability of the agriculture sector.
- The guidelines are one part of a suite of measures to promote the efficient use of water in the area.
- The guidelines have been developed to provide guidance to new or expanding irrigation developments and to make the application process as efficient, consistent and transparent as possible for all parties involved.
- The IDGs do not change the requirements placed on developers under the Water Act or any other Act but instead aims to align approval processes.
- Catchment Management Authorities (CMA's) are working to provide consistent irrigation development information across the state.
- The WGCMA has received feedback advising that irrigators do not like when agencies ask for different assessments at different times as this drags out the application process. The WGCMA have been working to implement changes to address these issues within these guidelines to ensure efficiency and transparency from the start.
- The following changes have been as made as a result of the review:
 - New Irrigation Development Working Group has been formed to ensure communication between agencies from the beginning of the process.

- Improved information and clarity for developers which includes factsheets which are regularly updated to ensure up to date relevant information is available.
- Clarity around linkages to other legislation.
- Clarification of complaints and appeals processes.
- Clarification of when the IDG process does not apply
- Updates to ensure consistency with northern and south-west Victoria.
- Next steps:
 - Finalise consultation process (comments close end of 2022)
 - Draft to working group for final review – End of January 2023
 - Commence endorsement process with the aim to have a final document by EOFY 2022/23

Ms Christine Reid, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA) advised the committee that:

- GHCMA are replicating the work by WGCMA to ensure consistency across SRW's area.
- There are no declared irrigation districts in the GHCMA area so the IDGs focus on take and use licences rather than water use licences.
- The primary role of the document is for use by agencies and factsheets have been developed for irrigators to provide proponents with information relevant to their needs.
- There is potential to extend the guidelines into the Corangamite CMA to provide consistency across the whole of southwest Victoria.

Mr Stark inquired as to what consideration had been given to applications for water use for plantations in the southwest as historically plantations haven't needed to apply for water like other irrigators. The committee was advised that water intercepted by plantations is not considered as either irrigation or Take and Use and therefore sits outside these guidelines. Mr Stark stated that this not a satisfactory result, and is something for the CMA to consider.

Mr Ingram noted a situation where an agency questioned an application after it was approved and water was being used on a property, highlighting the need for clear processes for applicants and agencies.

The Chair thanked Mr Goode and Ms Reid for attending the meeting.

6.2 Struber – Customer Engagement Reiver

Omi Koulas and Bill Hansen from Struber joined the meeting.

The members were advised Struber will be running a workshop to learn about how SRW engages with customers, specifically about what is and isn't working for the committee.

Members provided feedback which was captured by Struber with their report to be communicated to the next meeting of the SGRF.

Workshop concluded at 12:33pm.

6.3 Source, Demand and Values – Matt Hudson

Matt Hudson, Principal Hydrogeologist joined the meeting at 12:33pm to present on the Source, Demand and Values project.

Mr Hudson provided an overview of the project noting:

- the project's aim is to understand the reliability of water resources within SRW's area.
- Key driver of the project is SRW's climate adaptation plan
- The four components of the project are:
 - Thomson Macalister Climate Source Modelling
 - Climate Change Assessment of river diverter reliability for the whole of SRW's area
 - Hopkins basin detailed assessment
 - Bunyip basin detailed assessment

Mr Hudson detailed how the project analysed the possible impacts of climate change on unregulated surface water noting:

- Changes in how reliable the water supply would be in the future, by defining current reliability and also what bans could look like going forward. Mr Hudson discussed specific examples taken from Avon River monitoring gauges (a reliable system) and monitoring gauges in Moorabool, which is a relatively dry catchment.
- Assessments have identified that customers in some catchments may be restricted by an additional 25-33% by 2070 under the high climate change scenario.

Mr Hudson provided a more detailed overview on the assessments of the Hopkins and Bunyip basins. A copy of these presentations is provided as an attachment 1 to these minutes.

The committee discussed the results of the assessments and advised Mr Hudson that customers will want to understand medium and long term risk in relation to climate change.

The committee **requested** the information is also presented as a 'seasonal scenario', as irrigators would like to know how restrictions would affect irrigators at the time of the year they want to take water.

Mr Hudson advised that the information from these assessments will be shared with customers and stakeholders to understand further work opportunities that can feed into the climate change adaption plan. The committee **requested** that management workshop approaches to disseminate this information to customers and bring back a plan to the next committee meeting.

The Chair thanked Mr Hudson for the detailed presentation

Action	Action officer	Due date
Present Source, Demand and Values assessments as 'seasonal scenarios' so irrigators can see how restrictions could affect their water allocations at specific times of the year.	HUDSON	02/03/2023

Management to workshop ways to disseminate the Source, Demand and Values assessments to irrigators and advise the how this will occur at the next meeting.	HUDSON	02/03/2023
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7 **PRINCIPAL MATTERS – for discussion**

7.1 **Board Update**

Dr Doolan advised that the Board had recently met at a strategy workshop and the themes of the workshop were:

- regional development and how SRW can contribute to development in southern Victoria
- Financial sustainability
- Safe culture for staff and customers
- Best practice asset management
- Financial targets as detailed in the Pricing Submission and how they will be met the productivity savings and water sales
- Review how SRW engages with customer – Customer Engagement review
- Building strategic alliances
- Energy transition opportunities

Mr FitzGerald advised the committee that SRW get huge value out of the committee but have been finding it difficult to get new and diverse members, particularly in the irrigation areas.

Mr Drew stated the best advisory committee's have a wide cross section of members.

Dr Doolan left the meeting at 11:35am.

7.2 **Morwell River Diversion**

Mr Bryce Morden, Manager Groundwater and Rivers provided an overview of the diversion on the Morwell River noting,

- The river course has been changed over the years to accommodate coal mining, with some sections of the river now being man made.
- The current issue relates a failure in 2021 of a man made section of the river resulting in the river flooding into an area where coal is currently mined for use in the Yallourn power station.
- The immediate response to the failure was to create a coffer dam near Yallourn with pumps to by-pass the damaged site. Works then commenced to create a rock weir and channels upstream at Hazelwood to divert flood water into the Hazelwood mine void.
- Additional infrastructure was installed at Yallourn which allows water to be diverted into the mines to mitigate floods before returning it to the Morwell River.
- SRW has requested the energy companies advise of proposals for future use of infrastructure, including implications for current water users.

Mr Gleeson advised the committee that flooding has pushed back up the river and has spilled onto farmland. He stated parties involved in works on the Morwell River Diversion need to understand future impacts to farmers when the diversion fails again, and particularly who is responsible when there is no energy generation.

The committee discussed how water diverted into the mine pits can be used to ensure passing flows into the Latrobe River continue. Mr Drew advised the Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority are currently undertaking water quality studies of the water in the mine pits.

Mr FitzGerald advised the committee that SRW will keep this information on how new infrastructure is affecting farmers front of mind to ensure SRW are discharging their regulatory duties appropriately.

Ms Zilm left the meeting at 1:17pm

Mr Marshall left the meeting at 1:30pm.

8 **Principal Matters – for noting**

8.1 **Strategic focus and Manager Groundwater and Rivers Update**

The report was taken as read.

8.2 **Public Release of Central Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy**

Mr FitzGerald noted that the strategy had been released, and **requested** the presentation is held over to the next meeting.

Action	Action officer	Due date
Present on the Public Release of Central Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy at the next SGRF meeting.	FITZGERALD	02/03/2023

8.3 **Water is Life Launch**

This report is to be held over to the next meeting.

Action	Action officer	Due date
Present on the Water is Life Launch at the next SGRF meeting.	FITZGERALD	02/03/2023

9 **COMMITTEE MATTERS**

9.1 **Important issues from other customer committees**

Nil matters to note.

9.2 **Matters referred by/to the Board/board committee**

Nil matters to note.

10 **GENERAL BUSINESS**

Nil matters to note.

10.1 2023 Meeting Schedule

The committee **agreed** on the 2023 meeting schedule with the following amendments:

- One face to face meeting to be held in March 2023.
- Video Conference meetings to commence at 9:30am.

Action	Action officer	Due date
Update the 2023 SGRF meeting schedule to reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One face to face meeting to be held in March 2023• Video Conference meetings to commence at 9:30am	TAYLOR	19/12/2022

11 **MEETING EVALUATION**

The Chair sort feedback on the effectiveness of this meeting. The members did not provide any feedback.

12 **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum is Friday 2 March and will be held face to face in Melbourne.

13 **CLOSE**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and thanked SRW for the information and support. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe new year.

With no further business the meeting was declared closed at 1:41pm.

	March 2020	June 2020	Sept 2020	Dec 2020	March 2021	June 2021	Sept 2021	Dec 2021	
Ross Ingram	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apol	
Tom Wallace	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Josie Zilm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Daniel Hammond	✓	Apol	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Bruce Vallance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apol	✓	✓	
Damian Moore	✓		✓	Apol	✓	✓	Apol	Apol	
Kevin Stark	Apol	Apol	Apol	Apol	✓	Apol	Apol	Apol	
Matt Gleeson	Apol	✓	✓	✓	Apol	✓	✓	✓	
Steven Marshall	Apol	✓	✓	✓	Apol	✓	✓	✓	
Norm Drew			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Daniel Toohey			✓	✓	✓	✓	Apol	✓	

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