

# Macalister Customer Consultative Committee

## Minutes of Meeting 199

Date	Time	Location
27 June 2023	10:00am	SRW Maffra Office

### Present

Mr Alan Clyne	Committee Member
Mr Graeme Anderson	Committee Member
Mr Kate Lamb	Committee Member
Mr Norm Drew	Committee Member
Mr Stephen Dwyer	Committee Member

### In Attendance

Mr Cameron FitzGerald	Managing Director, SRW
Mr Simon Wilkinson	General Manager Service Delivery, SRW
Mr Matt Cook	Manager Water Supply East, SRW
Ms Hayley Taylor	Executive Assistant, SRW (Scribe)

### Apologies

Mr Benn Thexton	Committee Chair
Mr Brad White	Committee Member

### Absent

Ms Jeannette Howie	Committee Member
--------------------	------------------

### Guests

Penny Winbanks	Manager Strategic Partnerships and Policy
Matthew Stagg	Strategic Projects and Innovation Specialist
Clinton Harley	Strategy and Business Planner
Donna Mulcahy	General Manager - WaterPartners

## 1. Acknowledgement of County

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

## 2. Welcome and Apologies

The committee agreed that Matt Cook would chair the meeting as the committee chair was an apology for the meeting.

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and noted the apologies.

## 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 of minutes – Meeting 198

The minutes of meeting 198 were **approved**.

**Moved:** Norm Drew

**Second:** Graeme Anderson

## 5. Business Arising

The report was taken as read.

## 6. GUEST SPEAKERS

### 6.1 Macalister Avon Irrigation Development Project Update

Ms Penny Winbanks, Manager Strategic Partnerships and Policy, SRW provided an update on the Macalister Avon Irrigation Development project highlighting,

- The project aim is to test the feasibility and viability of extending water supply infrastructure across the Avon River. This includes assessing the available water resources and testing potential service impacts to current customers.
- The project relies on water savings from the MID, and it is expected that water would be delivered across the Avon, outside of peak demand periods or when channel capacity permits.
- On-farm storage for Avon customers would be required to ensure reliability and access to water during peak demand periods.
- Different service levels and tariffs would likely apply in the new area.
- The design options that are currently being explored including balancing storages of different sizes, and pipelines from/to different areas.
- Next steps will be to finalise the environmental assessments, economic analysis and MID service impacts and progress cultural heritage assessments.
- The draft report is expected by July/August 2023 and a briefing will be provided to DEECA in August.

The committee was advised that MCCC Chair, Benn Thexton, and MCCC member Brad White are part of the project reference group, along with representatives from Victorian Farmers Federation, GLaWAC, DEECA, AgVic and irrigators from the eastern side of the Avon River.

The committee discussed;

- Options to fill on farm storages in the new scheme by supplying water into the Avon River and allowing customers to extract this water. Management advised that utilising the Avon river as a supply mechanism was not a viable option for the project.
- Review of winter fill and high flow scenario rules to extract more water when available from the river and place into on farm storages, lessening the demand on the regulated water.
- Traditional Owner (TO) Water entitlements. Management advised SRW is engaging proactively with GLaWAC on the project which will continue through the reference group.
- Water security in the MID and additional water needs in the MID during dry periods and how that could affect customers across the Avon. Management outlined that service level agreements for new customers will ensure security for the current customers.

The committee thanked Ms Winbanks for the presentation.

Ms Winbanks left the meeting at 10:56am.

## **7. PRINCIPLE MATTERS – FOR NOTING**

### **7.1 Manager Water Supply East Update**

The report was taken as read.

### **7.2 Communications Report**

The report was taken as read.

## **8. PRINCIPLE MATTERS – FOR DISCUSSION**

### **8.1 Board Update**

Mr Cameron FitzGerald, Managing Director advised the board had recently discussed:

- Changes to committee structure which will be discussed at agenda item 10.
- Progress on MID Modernisation project – Phase 2:
  - Good progress is being made and Jaydo are still working towards the pipeline being connected for the start of the irrigation season.
  - Safety Incidents: SRW is meeting Jaydo about safety incidents and will be working through these matters with the contractor.

- SRW have received signed agreements from all customers, meaning SRW has full access to all sites.
- Main Northern Siphon 2 is being replaced with a flume. SRW are working to have the project completed by the start of the 2023/24 season, but contingency plans are being considered to ensure supply will be available at the start of the season if the project is not completed in time.

A committee member stated that Jaydo is consulting very well with customers, keeping them informed of the progress and giving farmers a lot of notice. Their contractors are doing a great job fencing.

Management **agreed** to organise a tour of the modernisation works and new flume for MCCC members.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Organise a tour of the modernisation works for the next MCCC meeting	M. COOK	August 2023

## 8.2 HARC Drainage Report

Mr Matthew Stagg, Strategic Projects and Innovation Specialist, provided an overview of the HARC Drainage review. The following points were discussed;

- The study was broken up into two parts, a Maintenance and Operations review and a Climate Risk review.
- The Maintenance and Operation Review indicates that the drainage systems are generally in good condition. Two recommendations are of note:
  - Recommendation 1 – develop a program of inspections and KPI's to inform regular maintenance activities..
    - The SRW Assets team are working to create an inspection schedule.
    - SRW is also working with council to manage the drainage network through memorandum of understanding.
  - Recommendation 2 – consider monitoring installation for assessing performance and understanding overtopping triggers and communication requirements.
    - SRW is formulating assessing optimal locations.
- Climate Review:
  - modelling was undertaken to consider level of service under differing climate scenarios.
  - risk assessments were undertaken to determine impacts of different scenarios (such as illegal dumping and siltation) to the drainage systems?

Mr Stagg advised that from the recommendations SRW:

- is implementing asset inspections, removing dead assets and install new monitoring equipment.

- has purchased new equipment to assist with maintenance activities and will work to replace aging equipment.
- is trialling different chemicals to kill weeds in the system.

The committee discussed the impact of crops being planted to the edge of easements/drains and how that can cause sediment to enter drainage system during large rain events.

### 8.3 Ordering System review

Mr Matthew Stagg, Strategic Projects and Innovation Specialist, provided an overview of the Ordering System review. The following points were discussed:

- The scope and timeline of the project.
- The Final report is expected in September 2023 and recommendations and implications will be presented to the MCCC at a future meeting.
- Mr Graeme Anderson, MCCC member will attend a meeting with HARC and SRW to discuss issues with the ordering system in June 2023.

A committee member stated that customers on the outer edge of the system will potentially always have issues, but this review will hopefully make a difference.

The committee thanked Mr Stagg for the presentations.

### 8.4 Water Trading Platform Demonstration

Mr Clinton Harley, Strategy and Business Planner, SRW, and Ms Donna Mulcahy, General Manager, WaterPartners, joined the meeting.

Mr Harley provided an overview of the project including:

- SRW have been working on a water utilisation project with DEECA, and have created a water trading platform to facilitate customer trades, initially within the MID.
- The platform will be released within the next few weeks.
- There are no identifying characteristics on the trade platform, and users will only find out who they have traded with once the trade is entered into the Water Register
- SRW is undertaking final testing and then the platform will be made live.
- There will be communication sent to customers, and WaterPartners as also offered to support to show customers how to use the platform.

Ms Mulcahy provided a demonstration of the platform.

The committee provided positive feedback on the platform and thanked Ms Mulcahy and Mr Harley for the presentation.

Mr Drew **requested** information on the fees customers will be charged for using the platform and management **agreed** to provide these details to Mr Drew out of session.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Provide a list of fees customers will be charged to use the water trading platform to Mr Drew.	M. COOK	14/07/2023

## 9. COMMITTEE MATTERS

### 9.1 Important issues from other customer committees

This agenda item was not discussed.

### 9.2 Matters referred to/by the Board/Board Committee

This agenda item was not discussed.

## 10. General Business

### Customer Engagement Review Update

Mr Cameron FitzGerald, Managing Director, SRW noted previous discussions with the committee and with consultants on SRW's Customer Engagement Review and provided an overview of the outcomes of the report highlighting;

- The need for wider customer representation and greater diversity (gender, age etc)
- A desire from board to ensure SRW has separate, customer only, engagement opportunities as well as broader stakeholder input.
- It is proposed that there will be three customer only engagement opportunities (MCCC, SGRF, Bacchus Marsh drop in sessions).
- Engagement with Werribee customers will be through the Wyndham Green-Wedge committee.
- SRW will also engage with customers and stakeholders through project specific groups.
- There will be a stakeholders group to bring all stakeholders, including customers, together to look at broad ranging issues that affect the organisation.
- It is proposed that an independent chair will be appointed for the MCCC and SGRF.

For the MCCC, SRW is proposing to change the frequency of the meetings to four meetings per year to encourage participation for larger corporations and attract greater diversity of members.

SRW will undertake recruitment for lapsed positions in July 2023. Where a member's term is due to end in 2024, they will be asked to express an interest to remain on the committee.

The last meeting for the current group is proposed for August 2023, with the first meeting of the new format to be scheduled for December 2023.

The Managing Director will write to all irrigators asking for expressions of interest in joining the committee.

The Managing Director reiterated the importance of the committee being able to bring issues to SRW and where required additional meeting(s) will be scheduled.

The committee was invited to provide feedback.

The committee **accepted** the proposal and emphasised that irrigators can bring issues to the attention of the independent chair and issues raised will be acted upon.

### 11. Meeting evaluation

Mr Drew **requested** that all data within the tables in the Weekly Snapshot is reported by financial year.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Update data fields within the tables in the Weekly Snapshot so that the data is reported by financial year.	M. COOK	28/07/2023

### 12. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Macalister Customer Consultative Committee will be scheduled for August 2023.

### 13. Close

With no further business the meeting was declared closed at 12:18am.

*The Minutes of Macalister Customer Consultative Committee meeting 199 were approved at the Macalister Customer Consultative meeting 200 on Tuesday 29 August 2023.*