

SGRF AGENDA

Meeting no. 49

9.30am, Friday 2 June 2023
Via MS Teams

*'We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are meeting.
We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities
who may be here today.'*



**Southern
Rural Water**

Managing Water. Serving Communities.

Southern Rural Water's Groundwater and Rivers Strategic Focus Areas

June 2022 – June 2023

There are five strategic focus areas for SRW in the Groundwater and Rivers area over the next 12 months:

1. Continued advocacy for sustainable access to water for irrigators via the implementation of GM2030, policy reforms in surface water management and key stakeholder groups.
2. Continue to encourage a flexible trading market through improved internal procedures and Government policies.
3. Provide more real time information for customers on water usage following the integration of meter reading data with mySRW portal to improve decision making.
4. Undertake more detailed water resource assessment across our systems through investment of unregulated water sales funds and the continuation of the Supply/Demand projects.
5. Understanding the implications of rapidly evolving cultural water policy on customer aspirations for improved access to water.

An update on what SRW is doing in relation to these focus areas is provided in the Manager Groundwater and Rivers Update at each meeting.

Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum

Meeting 49

Date	Time	Location
2 June 2023	9.30am	Via MS Teams

Topic			
1		Acknowledgement of County	Chair
2		Welcome and Apologies	Chair
3		Declaration of conflicts of interest	All
4		Confirmation of minutes – Meeting 48	Chair
	4.1	Attachment – Draft Minutes SGRF Meeting 48, 17 March 2023	
5		Business Arising	Chair
	5.1	Attachment - Business arising from previous meetings	
	5.2	Cultural training options	
6		<u>GUEST SPEAKERS</u>	
	6.1	GM2030	DEECA
	6.2	Source, Demand and Values – seasonal scenarios	Matt Hudson
	6.3	Interactive groundwater maps	Matt Hudson
7		<u>PRINCIPAL MATTERS – FOR DISCUSSION</u>	
	7.1	Board update	Jane Doolan
	7.2	Manager Groundwater and Rivers update	Bryce Morden
	7.3	Update on GWR strategic focus area's	Bryce Morden
8		<u>PRINCIPAL MATTERS – FOR NOTING</u>	
	8.1	Communications report	
	8.2	mySRW update	

9		<u>COMMITTEE MATTERS</u>	
	9.1	Important issues from other customer committees	Cameron FitzGerald
	9.2	Matters referred by/to the Board/board committee	Cameron FitzGerald
10		<u>GENERAL BUSINESS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Engagement Review • Moorabool dams investigation 	All
11		Meeting evaluation	
12		Next meeting	
13		Close	

Item No: 1

Subject: **Acknowledgement of Country**

'We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today.'

Item No: 2

Subject: **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair will welcome attendees and note any apologies for this meeting.

Item No: 3

Subject: **Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

The Chair will ask forum members to declare any conflicts of interest relating to the business of this meeting.

Item No: 4
Subject: Confirmation of minutes – Meeting 48
Action: For approval
Author: Hayley Taylor – Executive Assistant
Date: 12/05/2023

PURPOSE

1. To ensure that the minutes taken of committee meeting 48 are an accurate and sufficient record of discussions held and decisions made at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That the committee approves the minutes of meeting 48 held on Friday 17 March 2023.

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

2. Minutes are confirmed at each committee meeting.

BACKGROUND

3. Draft minutes are circulated after each committee meeting. Any suggested changes are captured as track changes, for consideration and confirmation at the following meeting.

REPORT

4. Draft minutes of meeting 48, held in person at VicWater, Melbourne, on Friday 17 March 2023 are provided in attachment 4.1.
5. **Budget impact:** Nil
6. **Link to strategy:** Nil.
7. **Risk:** Committee meeting minutes are a public record and may be subject to release under Freedom of Information. Directors should ensure that minutes accurately and appropriately reflect the discussion and decisions of the meeting.

NEXT STEPS

Who	Action
Meeting Secretary	Once confirmed, a hard copy of the minutes will be signed by the committee Chairman and saved on the board portal and Southern Rural Water Website.

Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum

Minutes of Meeting 48

Date	Time	Location
17 March 2023	10:00am	VicWater - Melbourne

Present

Mr Ross Ingram	Chair
Mr Tom Wallace	Forum Member
Mr Bruce Vallance	Forum Member
Mr Matt Gleeson	Forum Member
Mr Kevin Stark	Forum Member
Mr Norm Drew	Forum Member
Mr Daniel Hammond	Forum Member
Mr Steve Marshall	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	Manager Groundwater and Rivers, SRW
Ms Hayley Taylor	Executive Assistant, SRW (Scribe)

Apologies

Ms Josie Zilm	Forum Member, Deputy Chair
Mr Daniel Toohey	Forum Member
Mr Damien Moore	Forum Member

Guests

Naomi Douglas	Aboriginal Water Unit, DEECA
Lauren Chester	Murray and Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations

Due to availability of attendee's, agenda items were not discussed in order.

1. Acknowledgement of County

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.

Mr FitzGerald and Dr Doolan advised they would need to leave the meeting early.

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 47

The minutes of meeting 47 held on 2 December 2022 were **approved.**

Moved: Matt Gleeson

Second: Steve Marshall

5. Business Arising

The report was taken as read.

SRW **agreed** to supply the Terms of Reference for the Water Quality Study as part of Latrobe Valley Mine planning to the members.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Provide the Terms of Reference for the Water Quality Study to the members	B. Morden	20/04/2023

6. GUEST SPEAKERS

6.1 GW2023

SRW were unable to secure a speaker for this meeting. DEECA will be invited to attend the June 2023 meeting to discuss GW2030.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
DEECA to present on GW2030 at the June 2023 meeting.	B. Morden	20/05/2023

6.2 Water is Life

Naomi Douglas and Lauren Chester joined the meeting to discuss Water is Life.

DEECA advised:

- There was good engagement from Traditional Owner (TO) groups in all forums and workshops.
- Water is Life will be continuously reviewed based on feedback from TO groups.

The members noted that:

- Issuing licences to TO organisations may potentially create 'sleeper licences' and this would need to be thought through carefully.
- TO organisations should be able to trade their water if they wish consistent with other licence's issued
- It is important that the water is available for future generations of TO's and therefore any selling of allocation permanently should be carefully considered.
- There was a lack of communication with rural communities when bringing together Water is Life. Communicating with rural communities will reduce the risk of the creation of a divide between groups and help alleviate fears that water will be taken off irrigators.

The members **requested**:

- Management provide options for cultural training to committee members, preferably in their own areas.
- Copies of Water is Life is distributed to members including the presentation.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Management provide options for cultural training to committee members, preferably in their own areas.	B. Morden	20/05/2023
Copies of Water is Life is distributed to members including the presentation.	H. Taylor	20/05/2023

7. PRINCIPLE MATTERS – FOR NOTING

7.1 Communications Report

The report was taken as read.

7.2 Public Release of Central Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy (SWS)

The presentation was included as part of the meeting pack.

Key points noted:

- There are actions noted in the strategy that relate to surface and groundwater customers in SRW's region.
- The SWS does not cover the southwest area of SRW's region. Food and Fibre Great South Coast is working to propose a SWS to encompass the southwest and this is being considered by DEECA.
- SRW's Managing Director was a member of the consultative committee which also included TO groups, other water corporations and environmental organisations.
- Focus areas aligned to the matters raised within the forum to ensure the voice of customers was heard.
- Actions to explore the expansion of recycled water in the west. The current recycled water in the west is salty due to saline infiltration and industrial water use in metro areas. the SWS supports a current concept investigation study that looks to bring recycled water from Melton Treatment plant to reduce west irrigators reliance on water sourced from the Werribee River.
- Recognition of additional water entitlements available in the Latrobe system which includes 16GL of the $\frac{3}{4}$ bench to be allocated to TO groups, the environment and irrigators. The working proposition at this time is one-third each.
The committee inquired as to why the environment would be allocated more water. Mr FitzGerald advised a long term assessment determined there was a deficit for environment as when the current flows were set the modelling didn't take into account climate change.
- Funding for fishway at Maffra – 35km of Macalister River will be opened up to fish passage. When the weir was upgraded, SRW left space for a fish ladder and have recently gained funding to install the ladder. SRW are working with the West Gippsland CMA to design the ladder.

The members discussed:

- Further irrigation on the Latrobe: Mr FitzGerald stated that he is hopeful that this is close if all parties work together for an even distribution of the additional water. SRW is meeting with DEECA and the other organisation to work through the entitlements.
- Return of water to TO Groups: The Chair noted there is concern that sleeper licences are being created. People don't generally have an objection to TO Groups with a legitimate use for the water, but if there is no way to use the water, and the water isn't traded, then the TO licence becomes a sleeper licence which could impact reliability for existing licence holders but limit growth opportunities.
- Winterfill licence process to distribute 2GL of water: Management advised SRW is hoping to start the process once Tambo sales have been finalised and **agreed** to provide an out of session update to the committee by mid-April.
- Manufactured Water – The committee discussed whether politics would influence the uptake of recycled water. The Managing Director advised that a lot of work is being done around new and emerging contaminants, but recent

conversations indicated that the risk management practices and treatment elements are robust.

The committee questioned whether consideration has been given to using manufactured water for boosting stream flows. Mr FitzGerald advised there are significant EPA requirements that make implementing this approach challenging.

- Latrobe water – the committee discussed the filling of the mines with water. SRW noted that the mines have existing water entitlements and further work is required to understand if water can be used to fill the voids. A committee member raised concern that there may be issues with the groundwater as the mine voids are filled. Management advised the Mine Land Authority is overseeing investigations into the impacts of filling the mine voids with water.

The Managing Director advised the $\frac{3}{4}$ bench was previously being held as an entitlement in the Latrobe catchment for expansion of coal mining for electricity. Blue Rock is essential for electricity production and is run differently to other dams as there must always be water in it and it cannot be run down like Glenmaggie. This will change when power stations are closed and represents an opportunity to rethink storage operation rules. The committee inquired as to whether the board has considered creating more dams. The Managing Director advised that an on-stream dam in the Mitchell was considered a few years ago, but it involved flooding a national park. When this was identified as not possible, funding was secured for on-farm storage for irrigators in the area.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Provide a date as to when the 2GL of water Mitchell River water is to go on sale	B. Morden	20/04/2023

8. PRINCIPLE MATTERS – FOR DISCUSSION

8.1 Board Update

Dr Doolan advised the members of issues the board is currently discussing, including,

- Mine Land Rehabilitation: Strategy discussion around risks and opportunities

The committee discussed whether:

- The use on the licence allowed for the water to be used to fill the mine voids.

Mr Morden advised that if the licence conditions don't meet requirements for water to be used to fill the voids, then the mine owners will need to go through the same application process as other customers.

- Whether the potential impact to groundwater levels and impact to environment with filling the voids with water has been considered.

It was **agreed** that SRW would refer this question to the Land Mine Rehabilitation Authority as they are responsible for looking at the suite of issues relating to the mine voids.

- Enterprise Bargaining: currently waiting on a decision regarding the Wages Policy from Government.
- Corporate Plan: the next few years are expected to be challenging due to inflation and increased interest rates.
- Pricing Submission: Expect a draft from the ESC at the end of March.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Inquire with the Land Mine Rehabilitation Authority as to whether the potential impact to groundwater levels and impact to the environment has been considered when filling the mine voids with water.	C. FitzGerald	28/04/2023

8.2 Manager Groundwater and Rivers Update

The report was taken as read.

Mr Morden advised:

- DEECA is funding a Traditional Owner Application Officer that will set up processes and progress Traditional Owner Applications to avoid cost shifting onto existing customers.
- SRW are testing the safety systems in regard to undertaking compliance field work. There is a current Stop Work in place for compliance inspections that require two staff. This will be lifted once SRW is satisfied controls are in place to allow the work to be undertaken safely.

9. COMMITTEE MATTERS

9.1 Important issues from other customer committees

The Managing Director advised that:

- The MCCC and SRW held a special meeting to discuss water delivery delays in the MID. As a result of the meeting, on behalf of the MCCC a factsheet was produced for affected customers regarding the contributing factors for the delays and suggestions by the MCCC as to ways customers could minimise the impacts of the delays. SRW has also implemented changes to the running of the system to get more allocation in the system that customers can access.

SRW will now review ordering rules and system improvements to manage peak delivery periods. This will be done in consultation with affected customers.

- Customer Engagement Review is still progressing, and the recommendations will be discussed with the committee once it has been completed.

9.2 Matters referred to/by the Board/Board Committee

No matters have been referred to the committee by the board or board committee.

10. General Business

The members raised the following items:

- New Staff: It was recommended that SRW ensure processes and procedures are adequate to ensure knowledge gaps are minimised when there is staff turnover.
- Sale of Water: It was noted there is a feeling in the community that SRW are dragging their feet because of Kalbar stage 2. Management advised this is not the case and a timeline on the sale of the Mitchell Water will be communicated to members by mid-April.
- Advertisement for boards: The recent advertisement was noted by the members. SRW advised that four of SRW's Director's 4 year terms are coming to an end. Anyone wishing to apply for the position will go through an independent process. The members discussed the makeup of the board and raised concern that customers do not sit on the board anymore. Management advised that the board is skill's based, but anyone, including customers, with the appropriate skills can apply.
- SGRF member reappointment / recruitment will be looked at after engagement review. SRW seeks to have diverse representation across all its committees.
- Communication with Farmers: it was noted that previous communication method of farmers talking to farmers is not happening as much with big farm syndicates not speaking to smaller enterprises on a regular basis. It was suggested that SRW consider this when communicating with customers. Management referred back to the Engagement Review and noted that they recognise the changing customer base.

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 June 2023 and will be held via Video Conference.

13. Close

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

Item No: **5**
Subject: **Business arising from previous meetings**
Action: **For noting**
Author: **Hayley Taylor – Executive Assistant**
Date: **29/05/2023**

PURPOSE

1. To allow the forum to assess management progress on items identified for action from Southern Groundwater and River Forum meetings.

RECOMMENDATION: That the forum **notes** the status of business arising action items, including:

- four action items have been completed,
- two action items will be discussed within this agenda, and
- one action item remains open:
 - Action 25108 – awaiting copies of Water is Life from DEECA.

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

2. Business arising is considered each meeting.

BACKGROUND

3. Actions are captured in the minutes each month and transposed into risk wizard where base and aspirational dates are added along with the responsibility for completion.

REPORT

4. Attachment 5.1 describes each action item, its status, and a comment on its progress.
5. Attachment 5.2 provides information for cultural training within SRW's operating area.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS - Southern GWR forum

Action progress: Complete

Action	Source	Due date	Completed date	Accountable officer	Status comment	
25105	Provide the Terms of Reference for the Water Quality Study to the members.	SGRF meeting 48 - 17 March 2023, Agenda Item 5, Business Arising	20/04/23	29/05/23	Bryce Morden	Refer to agenda item 7.2 for links to the Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy Report – Regional Water Study Synopsis Report
25107	Management provide options for cultural training to committee members, preferably in their own areas.	SGRF meeting 48 - 17 March 2023, Agenda Item 6.2, Water is Life	20/05/23	29/05/23	Bryce Morden	Refer to attachment 5.2 for details on cultural training options.
25109	Provide a date as to when the 2GL of water Mitchell River water is to go on sale	SGRF meeting 48 - 17 March 2023, Agenda Item 7.2, Public Release of Central Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy (SWS)	20/04/23	29/05/23	Bryce Morden	Refer to agenda item 7.2 Update will be provided with meeting pack in May 2023 for the June 2023 meeting. Proposed sale date is 23 August 2023 with call for EoI in June 2023.
25110	Inquire with the Land Mine Rehabilitation Authority as to whether the potential impact to groundwater levels and impact to the environment has been considered when filling the mine voids with water.	SGRF meeting 48 - 17 March 2023, Agenda Item 8.1, Board Update	28/04/23	14/04/23	Cameron FitzGerald	Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority advises that technical studies to be undertaken as part of closure approvals will consider the potential for negative impacts to groundwater levels and the environment as well as mitigations available to minimise any identified impacts.

Action progress: This agenda

Action	Source	Due date	Completed date	Accountable officer	Status comment	
24983	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.	SGRF meeting 47 - 2 December 2020, Agenda Item 6.3 Source, Demand and Values	02/03/23	02/03/23	Matthew Hudson	Refer to agenda item 6.2 To be presented at the June 2023 SGRF meeting I have commissioned some additional work from GHD to present the analysis on a seasonal basis. This should be completed by 2 March, for presenting at a future SGRF.
25106	DEECA to present on GW2030 at the June 2023 meeting.	SGRF meeting 48 - 17 March 2023, Agenda Item 6.1, GW2030	20/05/23	19/05/23	Bryce Morden	Refer to agenda item 6.1

Action progress: Future items (include a status comment when due date prior to next meeting)

Action	Source	Due date	Completed date	Accountable officer	Status comment
25108	Copies of Water is Life is distributed to members including the presentation.	SGRF meeting 48 - 17 March 2023, Agenda Item 6.2, Water is Life	30/06/23	Hayley Taylor	Hard copies of Water is Life will be distributed once received from DEECA. Water is Life can be found online at https://www.water.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-values/the-aboriginal-water-program Due date extended.

Attachment 5.2 – Cultural training options

Contact details are provided below for Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP's) within Southern Rural Water's (SRW's) operating area.

Some RAP's websites do not list cultural awareness or cultural safety training, so members are advised to make contact via the website to find out if there is training that they can complete.

- **Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation**
<https://www.gunditjmirring.com/cultural-heritage>
- **Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation**
<https://easternmaar.com.au/>
- **Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation**
<https://www.wadawurrung.org.au/services>
- **Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation**
<https://www.wurundjeri.com.au/services/education-tours-cross-cultural-awareness-training/>
- **Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation**
<https://www.bunuronglc.org/contact.html>
General enquiries admin@bunuronglc.org.au
- **Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)**
<https://gunaikurnai.org/our-culture/cultural-services/>

SGRF members can find the Registered Aboriginal Parties in their area using the map found at <https://www.maggolee.org.au/registered-aboriginal-parties>

Item No: **6.1**

Subject: **GM2030**

Anthony Jenkins, Senior Policy Officer, Water Entitlements Licensing and Modelling, DEECA, will attend the meeting to discuss the implementation of the GM2030 strategy and seek advice on how to engage with groundwater users into the future.

Item No: **6.2**

Subject: **Source, Demand and Values**

Matthew Hudson, Principle Hydrogeologist will attend to discuss supply and demand works including, seasonal scenario analysis.

Item No: **6.3**

Subject: **Interactive groundwater map**

Matthew Hudson, Principle Hydrogeologist will attend to the interactive groundwater map recently published on the SRW Website.

The map divides the aquifer management units into aquifer layers – upper aquifers (the shallowest), middle and lower aquifers (the deepest). This helps users to locate which aquifer management unit they are in, and it provides some 3D context.

The interactive map shows our Groundwater Management Areas (GMA), these are typically areas of more intensive groundwater use, where specific management rules have been developed. Customers can locate their area of interest accurately on the map, work out which GMA they are in and click on it to access regulatory on the relevant GMA.

The management rules within GMAs describe how much groundwater can be licensed and specific trading rules, and other management requirements such as metering and groundwater monitoring.

The map can be found on the [groundwater information page](#) on the SRW website.

Item No: **7.1**

Subject: **Board Update**

Jane Doolan, Board member, will provide an overview of discussions at the most recent Board meeting.

Item No: 7.2

Subject: **Strategic Focus and Manager Groundwater and Rivers Update**

Action: **For noting**

Author: **Bryce Morden, Manager Groundwater and Rivers**

Date: **29/05/2023**

Issue	Commentary 2022-23
<p>Strategic focus 1. Continued advocacy for sustainable access to water for irrigators via the implementation of GM2030, policy reforms in surface water management and key stakeholder groups.</p>	<p>SRW, GMWater and DEECA have met to discuss clarifying policy arrangements for licencing water use at quarries and mines as part of GM2030. The objective is to develop consistent approaches to the licencing of water related activities. There are a range of targeted and incidental water interception and use cases across different quarry types (hard rock compared with gravel/sand).</p> <p>SRW is actively involved with a review of processes related to take and use licence renewal processes. The objective of this work is to streamline renewal processes across rural water corporations.</p>
<p>Strategic focus 2. Continue to encourage a flexible trading market through improved internal procedures and Government policies.</p>	<p>The Applications team within SRW have updated several internal workflow processes to streamline assessment of applications to trade.</p> <p>Changes to the DEECA Water Register resulting from the abolition of the Glenelg WSPA last year have been implemented with appropriate trading zones created.</p>
<p>Strategic focus 3. Provide more real time information for customers on water usage following the integration of meter reading data with mySRW portal to improve decision making</p>	<p>No change on mySRW for the period.</p>
<p>Strategic focus 4. Undertake more detailed water resource assessment across our systems through investment of unregulated water sales funds and the continuation of the Supply/Demand projects.</p>	<p>Supply/Demand project outputs have been updated to include seasonal impacts rather than annual impacts.</p> <p>SRW has developed a prioritised workplan for updating Local Management Plans has been drafted for work over the next 5 years.</p>

Issue	Commentary 2022-23
<p>Strategic focus 5.</p> <p>Understanding the implications of rapidly evolving cultural water policy on customer aspirations for improved access to water.</p>	<p>DEECA has funded the Senior Assessment Officer- Cultural Water role within SRW. This role will develop and implement processes for Cultural Water applications. The funding by DEECA is targeted to avoid cost impacts on existing SRW customers.</p>
<p>Staff movements</p>	<p>Senior Assessment Officer- Cultural Water: Jenny Cook, Werribee Office</p> <p>Field Officer Werribee – Rebecca (Bec) Dohnt</p> <p>Field Officer Koo Wee Rup (Maternity leave back fill) – Shelby Obrenovic</p>
<p>Water Sales</p>	<p>Mitchell River Sale – Call for Expressions of interest through June, site inspections through July and sale process in August 2023.</p>
<p>Compliance and enforcement</p>	<p>SRW has been on-boarded with Fines Victoria and from July 2023 will be able to issue Penalty Infringement Notices (PINs). The Water (Infringements) Regulations 2020 set out the Water Act breaches and associated penalties. PINs apply to a range of Water Act breaches across regulated and unregulated systems and provide a tool between warning letters and court base prosecution. PINs can apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking water without a water share in a declared system (up to 10ML) • taking or using water without a take and use licence from a non-declared system (up to 10ML) • wrongful take of water (up to 10ML), interfering with the flow of water in any waterway, aquifer or works without authorisation • breaching conditions of a take and use licence • breaching conditions of a works licence • breaching a restriction or prohibition in a permanent water savings plan <p>Victorian Water Compliance Community of Practice (CoP) met in Tatura in mid-May to develop a work plan for the next 12 -months. Key focus will be on unauthorised works, building enforcement capability in Rural Water Corporations and CMAs and exploration of remote sensing technology to support surveillance and enforcement actions.</p> <p>While in Tatura, Manager Groundwater and Rivers (Bryce) and Manager Water Licencing (Alisha) met with the Melbourne Water Diversions leadership team to discuss opportunities for collaboration on compliance capacity building. Following this discussion, staff from SRW and</p>

Issue	Commentary 2022-23
	<p>Melbourne Water will undertake the Cert IV Government Investigations together commencing in the next few months.</p> <p>SRW staff met with the GMWater diversions team follow the CoP with a focus on dam licencing and managing issues related to potentially hazardous dams where multiple regulators are involved (esp mine tailings dams).</p>
<p>Water Quality Reports – Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy</p>	<p>Links to the reports and technical studies below:</p> <p>Regional Water Study Factsheet</p> <p>Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy Report – Regional Water Study Synopsis Report</p>

Item No: 7.3
Subject: **Input into the review of the Groundwater and Rivers Strategic Outlook**
Action: **For discussion**
Author: **Bryce Morden, Manager Groundwater and Rivers**
Date: **26/05/2023**

PURPOSE

1. To seek feedback from the Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum (SGRF) on the review of the focus areas within the 2023-24 Strategic Outlook for endorsement by the SRW Board.

RECOMMENDATION: That the committee **consider** the current Strategic Focus Areas and provide comments on potential areas of adjustment and focus for 2022-23.

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

2. The current strategic focus areas are included and referenced in each Manager GWR's update to the SGRF.

BACKGROUND

3. The SRW Board reviews strategic focus areas for each customer group on an annual basis.
4. Strategic focus areas are reported to the SGRF each quarter through the Manager Groundwater and Rivers report. A copy of the report for each strategic focus for 2022-23 is included in Attachment 7.2.1.

REPORT

5. As part of the review of the strategic focus areas for 2023, specific input from the SGRF is sought on the existing focus areas and potential adjustments for 2023-24.
6. Focus areas should include consideration of any strategic issues or concerns that customer committee members are aware of within the broader customer community.
7. The committee is asked to provide comment on the following proposed strategic focus areas for inclusion in 2024 priorities:
 - a. *Improved application assessment processes:* Continue to improve application processes, including development of placed based approaches to risks where appropriate to streamline licensing decisions and streamlining applications to renew licences.
 - b. *Refinement of approach to Cultural Water:* Given increasing interest in cultural water, work with DELWP to ensure there is a consistent and reasonable approach to manage interest in cultural water in unregulated systems.
 - c. *Continued resource assessments:* Through a mixture of Supply/Demand assessments and review of planning arrangements, identify improvements to

both the understanding of long-term water resource availability and operational resource management arrangements.

- d. *Compliance obligations*: Continue to refine approach to compliance and enforcement obligations and how to ensure customers are provided tools and information to support their compliance with licence obligations.
 - e. *Implementation of CGSWS recommendations and GM2030*: Ensure a strategic approach to the management and implementation of recommendations and actions from the CGSWS and GM2030 when the strategies are released.
8. **Budget impact**: No unexpected budgetary impact as the focus areas will inform investment and effort from approved resourcing. Any actions that require new expenditure will go through our normal budget processes.
 9. **Link to strategy**: Ensuring a strategic focus on key issues will assist in the delivery of all relevant outcomes in the SRW strategy and delivery against the vision of “*Increased customer and community value through excellence in rural water management*”.
 10. **Risk**: This paper outlines strategic opportunities and challenges and is designed to inform response to these issues rather than present specific risks.

NEXT STEPS

Who	Action
Management	Incorporate feedback from the SGRF into the review of the Groundwater and Rivers Strategic Statement to be presented to the SRW Board for endorsement.
Management	Present the approved strategic focus areas to the SGRF at the next meeting.

Strategic Focus 1

Continued advocacy for sustainable access to water for irrigators via the implementation of GM2030, policy reforms in surface water management and key stakeholder groups.

Meeting 46 – 2 September 2022	Meeting 47 – 2 December 2022	Meeting 48 – 17 March 2023	Meeting 49 – 2 June 2023
	<p>Food and Fibre Great South Coast will be meeting with DELWP Policy group on Tuesday 6 December 2022 to workshop actions from the 18 Point Plan for water reform.</p>	<p>SRW participated in Food and Fibre Great South Coast (FFGSC) Sustainable Water Forum in February.</p> <p>SRW engaged with Orbost working group exploring water opportunities to support economic development following cessation of native timber forestry.</p>	<p>SRW, GMWater and DEECA have met to discuss clarifying policy arrangements for licencing water use at quarries and mines as part of GM2030. The objective is to develop consistent approaches to the licencing of water related activities. There are a range of targeted and incidental water interception and use cases across different quarry types (hard rock compared with gravel/sand).</p> <p>SRW is actively involved with a review of processes related to take and use licence renewal processes. The objective of this work is to streamline renewal processes across rural water corporations.</p>

Strategic Focus 2

Continue to encourage a flexible trading market through improved internal procedures and Government policies.

Meeting 46 – 2 September 2022	Meeting 47 – 2 December 2022	Meeting 48 – 17 March 2023	Meeting 49 – 2 June 2023
<p>SRW staff are currently contributing to DELWP programs to review and renew a range of policy and guidance materials. This includes Ministerial guidelines for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take and Use licences • Review of Take and Use licence renewal requirements • Review of Irrigation Licensing Guidance material <p>Additionally, staff are working with West Gippsland CMA and Glenelg Hopkins CMA on Irrigation Development Guidelines to streamline application processes and improve inter-agency communications.</p>	<p>Development of Irrigation Development Guidelines by CMAs to streamline referral process for new or expanding developments (presentation at this meeting).</p> <p>Collaborating with Melbourne Water in the development of a spatial tool to support more timely and consistent trade referral responses</p>	<p>Development of Irrigation Development Guidelines by CMAs to streamline referral process for new or expanding developments endorsed by SRW Board.</p> <p>Scoping feasibility of water trade platform for groundwater with DEECA.</p> <p>SRW actively involved with <i>Water Register Transform Project</i> including development of webforms for trade applications.</p>	<p>The Applications team within SRW have updated several internal workflow processes to streamline assessment of applications to trade.</p> <p>Changes to the DEECA Water Register resulting from the abolition of the Glenelg WSPA last year have been implemented with appropriate trading zones created.</p>

Strategic Focus 3

Provide more real time information for customers on water usage following the integration of meter reading data with mySRW portal to improve decision making

Meeting 46 – 2 September 2022	Meeting 47 – 2 December 2022	Meeting 48 – 17 March 2023	Meeting 49 – 2 June 2023
<p>No change on mySRW for the period.</p>	<p>New Taggle receiver masts to be installed at Bungaree to support Taggle role out in that area.</p> <p>Two new Taggle receivers are proposed for installation in the Latrobe Valley.</p> <p>No change on mySRW for the period.</p>	<p>No change on mySRW for the period.</p> <p>Taggle receiver installed for Bungaree with very good coverage of region – commencing roll-out of meter tags (transmitters)</p> <p>Two towers will be installed on Gippsland Water sites following new partnership agreement.</p> <p>Work commencing to identify receiver sites in Thorpdale.</p>	<p>No change on mySRW for the period.</p>

Strategic Focus 4

Undertake more detailed water resource assessment across our systems through investment of unregulated water sales funds and the continuation of the Supply/Demand projects.

Meeting 46 – 2 September 2022	Meeting 47 – 2 December 2022	Meeting 48 – 17 March 2023	Meeting 49 – 2 June 2023
Work recently completed on understanding changes in supply, demand and values across a sample of regulated, unregulated and semi-regulated surface water systems will be presented at the December SGRF.	Work recently completed on understanding changes in supply, demand and values across a sample of regulated, unregulated and semi-regulated surface water systems will be presented at this meeting.	Supply/Demand project outputs have been updated to include seasonal impacts rather than annual impacts.	Supply/Demand project outputs have been updated to include seasonal impacts rather than annual impacts. SRW has developed a prioritised workplan for updating Local Management Plans has been drafted for work over the next 5 years.

Strategic Focus 5

Understanding the implications of rapidly evolving cultural water policy on customer aspirations for improved access to water.

Meeting 46 – 2 September 2022	Meeting 47 – 2 December 2022	Meeting 48 – 17 March 2023	Meeting 49 – 2 June 2023
<p>See guest speaker item - Daniel Miller, CEO Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation.</p>	<p>Policy has been announced through the Central and Gippsland SWS https://www.water.vic.gov.au/planning/long-term-assessments-and-strategies/central-gipps-sws/traditional-owners</p> <p>Water is Life has been released including nation statements.</p> <p>DELWP has provided funding for a 12 month role to help SRW establish assessment processes, develop an overall work flow for processing current applications and progress as many applications for assessment as possible.</p>	<p>Water for Life has been released with implementation to be discussed in this meeting.</p>	<p>DEECA has funded the Senior Assessment Officer- Cultural Water role within SRW. This role will develop and implement processes for Cultural Water applications. The funding by DEECA is targeted to avoid cost impacts on existing SRW customers.</p>

Item No: **8.1**

Subject: **Communications and Engagement report – May 2023**

Action: **For noting**

Author: **Kris Perkovic, Senior Community Engagement Adviser**

Date: **19/05/2023**

PURPOSE

- To update the Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum on recent communications and engagement activities.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee note the report.

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

2. Communications and engagement activity is reported at each meeting.

BACKGROUND

3. The Communications and Engagement team develops communications plans, issues media releases, manages the website and social media, customer and community engagement activities and looks after media enquiries.

REPORT

4. News and media

<https://www.srw.com.au/news-media/southern-rural-water-launches-new-groundwater-map>

- Southern Rural Water has launched a new interactive map to help customers easily access groundwater management information in southern Victoria.

<https://www.srw.com.au/news-media/end-irrigation-season>

- Irrigation season for Thomson and Macalister River and Rainbow Creek river diverters concludes on 30 June.

<https://www.srw.com.au/news-media/exposure-water-industry-through-work-experience>

- Southern Rural Water has launched a new work experience program for students aged 15 years and above.

5. Social media


Our social media campaigns have received good responses. Below are some examples of content since the last meeting. Please follow our social media pages to see more.

Southern Rural Water
6 April · 🌐

The weather is about to get a little fresh and so is the Werribee River.

Another release of environmental water from Melton Reservoir will pass through the lower Werribee River to support healthy aquatic ecosystems.

We're proud to frequently deliver these environmental freshes in partnership with [Melbourne Water](#) and the [Victorian Environmental Water Holder](#).



Melbourne Water
3 April · 🌐

We're working with [Victorian Environmental Water Holder](#) and Southern Rural Water to deliver another autumn freshening flow for the lower Werribee. Around 190 me... See more

Southern Rural Water
4 d · 🌐

We've just given Cowwarr Weir a tune-up.

We've reinstalled a fully refurbished gearbox as part of its first major revamp since 1957.

There are two more gearboxes to be replaced and will continue in stages so there are no interruptions to our customers.


The improvements will support how we regulate the flow of water for the Thomson River and Rainbow Creek and remains a reliable asset for our irrigation customers, the community and the environment for many years to come.



Southern Rural Water
3 May at 15:40 · 🌐

We're working with the [West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority](#) and the [Victorian Environmental Water Holder](#) to deliver environmental flows that significantly support the migration of our native fish species.

Hitting the water this weekend?




West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
28 April at 17:23 · 🌐

👉 Two environmental flows are underway in the Carran Carran (Thomson) & Wirm windmook Yirung (Macalister) rivers until the end of June.

Southern Rural Water
21 March · 🌐

Last week, we visited the Annulus Wetlands in Yarra Flats Park with [Melbourne Water](#). We heard about how environmental watering practices help support the local ecosystem.

Our Groundwater and Rivers Manager, Bryce Morden, talked about how we keep a close eye on sustainable water use, using telemetry - remotely monitoring and collecting data across various water systems.



Southern Rural Water
12 April · 🌐

Our current water allocations.

For our Macalister Irrigation Area customers Low Reliability Water Shares have increased to 50%. The next review will be Tuesday, 18 April.

To find out more and to stay updated visit www.srw.com.au

Allocations

- Werribee (Groundwater)
100% (HRWS)
- Macalister Irrigation Area
HRWS 100% | LRWS 50%
- Bacchus Marsh & Werribee Irrigation District
HRWS 100% | LRWS 100%


Southern Rural Water
5 May at 09:28 · 🌐

The irrigation season for Macalister Irrigation District will finish on Monday, 15 May.

All water trading applications need to be received by Monday, 8 May and irrigation orders received by Wednesday, 10 May.

The season for our Thomson and Macalister River and Rainbow Creek river diverters will finish on Friday, 30 June.

Orders can be placed via our website www.srw.com.au.



**End of season:
Macalister Irrigation
District**

NEXT STEPS: A further update will be provided at the next SGRF meeting.

Item No: **8.2**

Subject: **mySRW update**

SRW's ICT team is continuing to work to make the mySRW accessible to all SRW customers. Currently,

- there are 1243 active customers in system
- 194 customers have logged in the past 12 months
- the portal hosts 8 forms that auto populate information for the logged in user
- the portal displays current account balance
- the portal provides key information (Debtor number, Bill date, Amount, Due date) for the user

The project team received a list of 35 enhancements for the portal and has reviewed the requirements and ranked them based on Customer Strategy and effort required.

The project team is working on the following enhancements which are expected to be completed by December 2023:

- Resolve data issue to get all the customers on mySRW portal.
The team is exploring integration options to get customer data onto the portal.
- Display historical Bills (downloadable copy) on portal.
The team has reached out to solution providers and a quote is under review.
- Pay bills and applications online.
Phase 1 – pay application online is in progress as part of srw.com.au project.

Management will provide a progress update at the next SGRF meeting and invite the project team to demonstrate enhancements as they are implemented.

Item No: **9.1**

Subject: **Important issues from other customer committees**

Cameron FitzGerald, Managing Director, will provide a verbal update on important issues raised at other customer committees.

Item No: **9.2**

Subject: **Matters referred by the Board**

Jane Doolan, Board member, will discuss matters that have been referred by/to the Board.

Item No: **10**

Subject: **General Business**

The Chair will introduce any items of general business.

- Customer Engagement Review
- Moorabool dams investigation

Item No: **11**

Subject: **Meeting evaluation**

The Chair will seek feedback on the effectiveness of this meeting.

The Chair will ask the forum to assess the performance of the committee at this meeting, using the below questions as a guide.

1. Do we think the committee is adding value?
 2. What's working?
 3. What's not working?
-

Item No: **12**

Subject: **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum will be held online, on Friday 1 September 2023.

Item No: **13**

Subject: **Close**

The Chair will close the meeting.
