

SGRF AGENDA

Meeting no. 53

9.00am, Friday 3 May 2024
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.

Our Vision

Great value for customers and community through excellence in rural water management



Our Trademark Values

We are Always Safe and Accountable working as One Team to deliver a lasting Legacy.

Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum member locations



Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum - 3 May 2024

Southern Rural Water's Groundwater and Rivers Strategic Focus Areas

June 2023 – June 2024

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 Groundwater and Rivers Update at each meeting.

Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum

Meeting 53

Date	Time	Location
3 May 2024	9.00am – 12.00pm	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 52	Chair
	4.1	Attachment – Draft Minutes SGRF Meeting 52, 2 February 2024	
5		Business Arising	Chair
	5.1	Attachment - Business arising from previous meetings	
6		<u>PRINCIPAL MATTERS – FOR DISCUSSION</u>	
	6.1	Groundwater and Rivers update	Penny Winbanks
	6.2	South-West Limestone Barriers to Trade	Clinton Hartley
	6.3	Metering discussion	Penny Winbanks
	6.4	Board update	Jane Doolan
7		<u>PRINCIPAL MATTERS – FOR NOTING</u>	
	7.1	Communications report	
8		<u>COMMITTEE MATTERS</u>	
	8.1	Important issues from other customer committees	Cameron FitzGerald
	8.2	Matters referred to the Board/board committee	Jane Doolan
	8.3	2024 Committee workplan	

9	<u>GENERAL BUSINESS</u>	All
10	Meeting evaluation	
11	Next meeting	
12	Close	12.00pm

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 52
Action: For approval
Author: Hayley Taylor – Executive Assistant
Date: 24/04/2024

PURPOSE

1. To ensure that the minutes taken of committee meeting 52 are an accurate and sufficient record of discussions held and decisions made at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That the committee approves the minutes of meeting 52 held on Friday 2 February 2024.

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 52, held online via MS Teams, on Friday 2 February 2024 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, the minutes will be saved in Southern Rural Water's document management system and Southern Rural Water's Website.

Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum

Minutes of Meeting 52

Date	Time	Location
2 February 2024	9:00am	via MS Teams

Present

Mr Ross Ingram	Chair
Mr Bruce Vallance	Forum Member (via MS Teams)
Mr Daniel Hammond	Forum Member
Mr Matt Gleeson	Forum Member
Mr Kevin Stark	Forum Member
Mr Norm Drew	Forum Member
Mr Matt Zagami	Forum Member
Mr Steve Marshall	Forum Member

In Attendance

Mr Cameron FitzGerald	Managing Director, SRW
Dr Jane Doolan	Board Director, SRW
Mr Simon Wilkinson	General Manager Service Delivery, SRW
Ms Hayley Taylor	Executive Assistant, SRW (minutes)

Apologies

Mr Daniel Toohey	Forum Member
Ms Penny Winbanks	Manager Statutory Functions

Guests

Mr Randall Nott	Senior Manager Groundwater Assessment and Modelling, DEECA
Matt Hudson	Principal Hydrogeologist, SRW
Clinton Hartley	Strategy and Business Planner, SRW

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 and noted the apologies.

The Chair welcomed the new SGRF member, Matt Zagami, to the committee. Mr Simon Wilkinson, General Manager Service Delivery, invited all members to introduce themselves and provide an overview of their operations and reason for joining the committee.

Matt Zagami – Vegetable production in far east Gippsland, between Bairnsdale and Orbost. Irrigates from bores and streams and was interested in joining this committee as the region is trying to increase their knowledge on access to and trading of water.

Kevin Stark – sheep and cattle, fodder crops in Lake Mundi, irrigating from bore water.

Norm Drew – Dairy farmer and Thomson River and groundwater irrigator.

Daniel Hammond – Bulmer Farms representative, growing baby leaf and vegetables in the Lindenow Valley.

Steve Marshall – Manages farms on the Mornington Peninsular growing avocado's, wine grapes and olives, mostly uses groundwater.

Bruce Vallance – Dairy farmer in Warrnambool, irrigating from the Limestone Aquifer.

Matt Gleeson – Dairy farmer in Boolara, irrigating from the Morwell River

Dr Jane Doolan – Board Director for two years but has a long history in water management in Victoria. Role in this committee is to listen and take messages, questions and comments back to the board.

Cameron FitzGerald – Managing Director for almost 5 years, business seeks to deliver great value for customers and the community SRW serves.

Other SRW staff in attendance provided an overview of their roles at SRW.

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 51

The minutes of meeting 51 held on 1 December 2023 were **approved**.

Moved: Kevin Stark **Second:** Steve Marshall

5. Business Arising

The report was taken as read.

6. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS – CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR VOTE

Mr Simon Wilkinson, General Manager Service Delivery invited nominations for both the Chair and Deputy Chair positions on the SGRF committee.

The committee unanimously appointed Mr Ross Ingram to the position of Chair of the SGRF until August 2025.

Mr Ingram nominated Mr Bruce Vallance for Deputy Chair of the SGRF. The committee unanimously appointed Mr Bruce Vallance as Deputy Chair of the committee until August 2025, noting that the committee supported having the positions spread geographically across the state.

Mr Ingram and Mr Vallance **accepted** the appointments.

7. GUEST SPEAKERS

7.1 Border Groundwaters Agreement Review Committee for the South Australian/Victorian border.

Mr Matthew Hudson, Principal Hydrogeologist, SRW, and Mr Randall Nott, Senior Manager Groundwater Assessment and Modelling, DEECA provided the committee with an overview of the Border Groundwaters Agreement including:

- the purpose of the agreement was established in 1985 to cooperatively manage and equitably share groundwater resources. The agreement applies to a 40km wide strip straddling the SA/Vic border, with 11 zones on each side of the border. Zones 1B, 2B1 3B and part of 4B are covered by SRW.
- There are two main regional aquifers, Tertiary Limestone Aquifer and Confined Sand Aquifer with the Limestone Aquifer being heavily developed.
- Key features of the agreement include caps on entitlement in each zone, restrictions on issuing new licences if specified rate of groundwater level decline is exceeded and a five yearly review of the groundwater management arrangements.
- Current work of the committee:
 - Review of the agreement completed and scheduled for consultation (no major changes),
 - Province 1 and Province 2 technical and management reviews are underway with most SRW licences being in Province 1), and
 - Annual report for 2022-23 has been drafted. Annual reports are available online.
- Emerging Issues:
 - Understanding and adapting to the impact of climate change,
 - Potential for increased use,

- Ensuring environmental and cultural values are considered in the implementation of the Agreement, and
- Potential new demands for water (e.g. Mineral sand exploration).

The committee inquired:

- about changes to the Agreement. Mr Hudson advised that changes include Traditional Owner (TO) and environmental concerns and amendments to deal with overallocated systems more consistently.
- whether saline intrusion was an issue. Mr Hudson advised that it does not appear to be an issue in SA at this time, it will continue to be monitored.
- as to how SA was managing its overallocation. Mr Nott advised they are managing over allocation through their Local Management Plans, but a recent review considered opportunities to enhance technical assessments so further investigations into the science behind the technical assessments is currently underway.
- as to how new water users in the area such as mines are regulated. Mr Hudson advised that mines would require a take and use licence, and may have restrictions depending on the zone they are in and would be required to undergo assessments on trades, depending on the area they are applying in.

The committee discussed plantation licences and inquired as to whether SRW have made any recommendations to state government for plantations to be licenced in Victoria. Mr Nott advised that the current SWS includes discussion on plantation forestry which is a watching brief and will continue to be monitored. Mr FitzGerald, Managing Director, advised that he has taken previous committee discussions on this matter to the Government, and will continue to raise this topic as the opportunity arises which was appreciated by the members.

The committee discussed the shut-down of the native timber industry and the potential impacts of new plantations on water resources. Mr Nott stated that in some areas it appears that plantations are decreasing, and while he is unsure of the exact reasons, it appears that the cost vs return is not beneficial and some areas are not being replanted. The committee **recommended** that the board and government be made aware of how new timber plantations could impact water security for irrigators.

The committee discussed licencing arrangements in the area and whether perpetual licences would be considered for Victoria. Mr Nott advised that this would be considered as part of GM2030 but he does not know if perpetual licences are being considered.

A member inquired about impacts of mining and offshore oil activities impact groundwater resources and what is happening to ensure that irrigators are not being impacted. Management advised that in Yarram specifically, there is annual reporting to the Minister that tracks and monitors levels. SRW will continue to feedback concerns from the committee to the government.

The committee thanked Mr Hudson and Mr Nott for attending the meeting.

Mr Hudson and Mr Nott left the meeting at 9.59am

A copy of the presentation will be distributed to the committee after the meeting.

7.2 Southwest Limestone Barriers to Trade – Project update

Mr Clinton Hartley, Strategy and Business Planner, SRW provided the committee with an update on the Southwest Limestone Barriers to Trade Project.

RMCG was appointed as project consultant and they have commenced interviews with customers, and initiated TO engagements, developed an online survey and completed a background research paper.

Stakeholder consultation will continue to February 2023 and include face-to-face interviews with customers and community stakeholders, with the report due in March 2024.

The Chair inquired as to how many sleeper licences were in the area. Management **agreed** to take the question on notice and report back outside the meeting.

Mr Hartley advised that approximately 30% of licenced water in the area is being taken, but there are barriers around trading due to trading rules and willingness to trade.

The committee discussed the participation rate, the effectiveness of face-to-face conversations, customers willingness to engage with consultants and other opportunities for engagement and **requested** that the survey closing date is pushed out, to allow for more people to complete the survey. Mr Hartley **agreed** to speak with the consultants and request an extension to the engagement period, as well as look at other ways to engage with stakeholders and promote the survey.

Post meeting update: after speaking with the consultants and DEECA the project manager has confirmed an extension of the survey through to the end of February. One of the strategies to boost the survey participation will be to utilise Field Officers undertaking meter reading activities, who will ask license holders to do the survey on the spot given it takes around one minute. It is anticipated this should get the response rate that was originally sought.

A member stated there is a lot of interest in water trading from smaller regions and aquifer areas and would be interested to see the results and how they could be implemented in other areas. Mr Hartley advised that the team is hopeful that the findings will be transferable to other areas.

The committee thanked Mr Hartley for attending the meeting.

Mr Hartley left the meeting at 10:22am

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Advise SGRF on how many sleeper licences there are in the South-West Limestone area	C. HARTLEY	20/02/2024
Request RMCG extend the engagement period for the SWL Barriers to Trade Project as well as look at other ways to promote the survey	C. HARTLEY	6/02/2024

8. PRINCIPLE MATTERS – FOR DISCUSSION

8.1 Groundwater and Rivers update

The report was taken as read.

Mr Simon Wilkinson, General Manager Service Delivery highlighted:

- Mitchell River Water Sale was completed in December 2023 with 62% of available water sold. The remaining water has been put back on the self for purchase.
- Moorabool Dam inspections are continuing to ensure that the dams are brought into compliance. Site visits are being undertaken where there has been no response, and in cases of non-compliance, enforceable directions under the Water Act have been issued. Some of these cases have gone to VCAT and SRW will follow the legal process. SRW will continue to educate customers on their obligations.

The committee inquired as to whether there is there a statute of limitations if a dam was illegally constructed. The General Manger Service Delivery advised there are limitations for penalty notices, but SRW's powers under the Water Act are enduring to require removal of illegal structures, and that these powers are being and will continue to be used where breaches are confirmed.

Management confirmed that SRW will continue to expand and improve compliance activities, which could include further targeted catchment-based compliance projects to ensure that SRW is properly enforcing the Water Act.

8.2 Board Update

Dr Jane Doolan, Board Director, advised the members of issues the board is currently discussing, including:

- Next meeting of the board is scheduled for 6 February 2024.
- Items discussed at the December 2023 board meeting were the Customer Committee Appointments and feedback from the Strategic Futures Forum. This forum was very useful for SRW and SRW's annual Corporate Plan will include outcomes from the Board Strategy session and the Strategic Futures Forum.
- The February board meeting will consider how SRW will turn the outcomes of the forums into initiatives, that will move the business forward into 2024/25.

The Chair stated that SRW had a very talented board, but there is a lesser emphasis being made on practical farming/agricultural experience. The Managing Director reiterated the important skills the directors bring to the organisation, and highlighted the value of this committee to be able to provide practical irrigator experience to ensure SRW always understands the issues affecting customers.

Key messages from the committee will be communicated to the board at the next meeting.

9. PRINCIPLE MATTERS – FOR NOTING

9.1 Communications Report

The report was taken as read.

10. COMMITTEE MATTERS

10.1 Important issues from other customer committees

The Managing Director advised:

- there has been a significant change to the membership of the MCCC with a kick-off informal briefing for the new members in December 2023, and noted Mr Drew's contribution to developing a comprehensive induction package for new members.
- EOI has been sent out for customers to be involved in the Werribee Reconfiguration Project, the purpose of which is to develop a business case to supply high quality recycled water to customers in the area, while also provide positive environmental impacts to the Werribee River.
- SRW has facilitated drop-in sessions for Bacchus Marsh Customers, and it has provided a good opportunity to understand what is working well, and what SRW can do to improve services.
- SRW is involved in the Werribee Green Wedge Committee, which allows SRW to have a regular dialogue with the council and customers.

10.2 Matters referred to/by the Board/Board Committee

Dr Doolan, Board Director advised that she would provide the following feedback to the board:

- Interest in South-West regarding the management of forestry framework - Committee asked that SRW to continue to advocate for customers rights to water.
- SWL trading platform – recommendation from the committee that the engagement period is extended.
- Committee has expressed an interest in understanding the impacts of the shut-down of offshore oil rigs to groundwater.
- Skill matrix for the board – committee discussed the potential for gaps in the board's knowledge in regard to irrigated agriculture.
- Shutdown of native timber industry – impacts of new timber plantations on water resources, and how this could impact water security for irrigators– something that the board and government need to be aware of.

The committee discussed modernisation in the Thomson, Macalister Irrigation district and inquired as to the board's view on increasing customer charges for those that do not need to use energy to run irrigation infrastructure, compared to those that can utilise the pressure of modernised assets to run their infrastructure. The Managing Director noted that in previous discussions for the price submission that the general view of customers in the area was that there was not a great deal of support for tiered tariffs, but SRW will continue to have these conversations with customers.

10.3 2024 Committee workplan

The committee **noted** the 2024 committee workplan.

Once a consultant for the small farm dams has been appointed SRW will ensure they attend the meeting to discuss the project.

11. General Business

Kevin noted that the mySRW website was difficult to use when recently making an application with SRW. The General Manager Service Delivery advised that he would provide this feedback to SRW's customer service team for consideration for enhancements to the tool.

12. Meeting evaluation

The Chair sought feedback on the effectiveness of this meeting with the general consensus being that the meeting was well organised, well managed and focused on valuable topics.

The Chair thanked the committee for the meeting and confidence of the committee in reappointing him as Chair.

The committee understand why the consultative committees are important to the board, and it is important to utilise them to inform the board of current issues. The Chair noted that it would not work without Jane, Simon and Cameron's attendance at these meetings and thanked Jane for attending and noted her experience in the water industry.

13. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum will be held on Friday 3 May 2024 via MS Teams.

14. Close

With no further business the meeting was declared closed at 11:07am.

Item No: 5
Subject: **Business arising from previous meetings**
Action: **For noting**
Author: **Hayley Taylor – Executive Assistant**
Date: **26/04/2024**

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:

- two action items have been completed, and
- once action item will remain open until the date of the Strategic Futures Forum has been confirmed.

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.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS - Southern GWR forum

Action progress: Complete

Action	Source	Due date	Completed date	Accountable officer	Status comment	
25348	Advise SGRF on how many sleeper licences there are in the South-West Limestone area	SGRF meeting 52- 2 February 2024, Agenda Item 7.2 Southwest Limestone barriers to trade	20/02/24	16/02/24	Hayley Taylor	In 2022-23 there were 535 metered licences in the south-west limestone area, with a volume of 98,412ML. 276 (52%) with a volume of 19,880ML, were sleeper licences. This means that while 52% of metered licences are sleeper licences, the volume of the sleeper licences is only 20.2% of the total metered volume. A further 14% used less than 10% of their available allocation including carry over. 2022-23 was the lowest usage year on record.
25349	Request RMCG extend the engagement period for the SWL Barriers to Trade Project as well as look at other ways to promote the survey	SGRF meeting 52- 2 February 2024, Agenda Item 7.2 Southwest Limestone barriers to trade	06/02/24	02/02/24	Hayley Taylor	After speaking with the consultants and DEECA the project manager has confirmed an extension of the survey through to the end of February. One of the strategies to boost the survey participation will be to utilise Field Officers undertaking meter reading activities, who will ask license holders to do the survey on the spot given it takes around one minute. It is anticipated this should get the response rate that was originally sought.

Action progress: Overdue

Action	Source	Due date	Completed date	Accountable officer	Status comment	
25330	Advise the SGRF of the date of the Strategic Futures Forum as soon as it is known.	SGRF meeting 51- 1 December 2023, Agenda Item 11 - Meeting evaluation	29/03/24		Hayley Taylor	Due date extended as date has not been confirmed. Action to remain open until date is confirmed, and SGRF notified.

Item No: **6.1**

Subject: **Strategic Focus Areas and Groundwater and Rivers update**

Action: **For noting**

Author: **Penny Winbanks, Manager Statutory Functions**

Date: **26/04/2024**

Focus area	Commentary
<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>DEECA will continue to be invited to SGRF meetings to discuss GM2030.</p> <p>SRW continue to actively participate to discussions around apportionment of allocation from the 3-4 bench, as well as other forums around licensing and metering guidelines and access to unallocated water.</p>
<p>Strategic focus 2. Continue to encourage a flexible trading market through improved internal procedures and Government policies.</p>	<p>SRW has commenced work to explore opportunities for a trade platform supporting trade in unregulated systems focusing on the South West Limestone as a pilot. This work will follow a similar approach to that used to develop the trade platform for the Macalister Irrigation Area.</p> <p>A project update is provided within this report.</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>SRW's focus for mySRW is to deliver an e-billing upgrade. Customers will have access to a payment gateway for applications and online payment features. Customers will be able to receive bills electronically and pay bills immediately via gateway.</p> <p>The team is working toward completing this project this financial year. The team is awaiting a 'proof of concept' from a supplier and will then undertake a review of the concept to determine whether there are any consequential matters that would mean the concept would not be fit for purpose.</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>We have initiated work to consolidate our understanding of how climate change may impact the reliability of water systems.</p> <p>This combined with findings from DEECAs Sustainable Yield project will help us identify critical focus points for investment.</p>
<p>Strategic focus 5. Understanding the implications of rapidly evolving cultural water policy</p>	<p>SRW are working with DEECA to gain clarity and determine equitable processes. This will link to work being completed by the Strategy, People & Culture Group.</p>

on customer aspirations for improved access to water.	In the meantime, we will continue to assess complete applications for water from Recognised Aboriginal Parties (RAP) on a case-by-case basis.
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Issue	Commentary
South West Limestone - Barriers to trade project	<p>DEECA has funded a social research project to understand the barriers to trade within the Southwest Limestone GMA.</p> <p>This work has been largely completed and the findings will be presented and discussed at the meeting on 3 May 2024</p>
Compliance and enforcement	<p>We have initiated an internal process to undertake an audit of potentially hazardous dams. This includes an audit of licence terms, and inspections of all high c and high b dams due for renewal this year (which is roughly 150).</p> <p>We are also seeking to determine a compliance uplift strategy/roadmap that will be presented to the group in August</p>
3-4 bench apportionment update	<p>SRW have been engaged with DEECA and other key stakeholders as we work through Action 4-7 of the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy which seeks to allocate 16GL to irrigators, the environment and Traditional Owners.</p>
Moorabool Dams Investigation	<p>Through our investigations SRW issued out 'show cause' notices for 55 dams, of these 55 dams we have determined that there is no further actions required for 20 dams.</p> <p>We have issued 11 Ministerial Directions including, two s80 notices, one s151 Notice of Contravention, and eight s78 notices.</p> <p>The remaining dams are still the subject of further field investigations.</p> <p>Following the issue of notices, to date, three dams were escalated through VCAT and we are currently working through a legal process to determine next steps.</p>
Small dams investigation	<p>Within the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water strategy there is an action to undertake an assessment of the impact of small catchment dams in peri urban environment.</p> <p>SRW released a tender for this work earlier this year which has now closed, and assessment of proposals is currently underway.</p> <p>We will provide an update on the progress of this work at the meeting in August.</p>

Issue	Commentary
Water for Traditional Owners	<p>We have a number of applications for water from Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP) and we are currently reassessing them to determine what if any further information is required before we initiate an assessment process.</p> <p>Once an application is complete we work directly with the individual RAP to determine the extent and nature of engagement associated with the assessment process.</p>

Item No: **6.2**

Subject: **South-West Limestone Barriers to Trade Project**

Mr Clinton Hartley, Strategy and Business Planner, SRW, will attend the meeting to discuss the outcome of the South-West Limestone Barriers to Trade Project and seek feedback from the committee on how to implement the recommendations.

Item No: **6.3**

Subject: **Metering discussion**

Ms Penny Winbanks, Manager Statutory Functions, SRW, will facilitate a discussion of SRW's current metering practices, and seek input from the committee on improvement opportunities including:

- Reading frequency
 - Compliance uplift
 - Benefits and engagement
-

Item No: **6.4**

Subject: **Board Update**

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

Item No: 7.1
Subject: **Communications and Engagement report – May 2024**
Action: **For noting**
Author: **Kris Perkovic, Senior Community Engagement Adviser**
Date: **3/05/2024**

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. Quarterly newsletter

Southern Rural Water issued its latest region-wide customer newsletter in late February 2024. It was distributed to customers with a valid email address.

5. Website

A selection of stories published on our website focused on groundwater and rivers.

www.srw.com.au/news-media/saving-water-tastes-sweet-gippsland-apple-grower

www.srw.com.au/news-media/southwest-dryland-farmer-squeezes-value-every-drop

www.srw.com.au/news-media/autumn-season-outlook-dry-forecast-still-plenty-water-storages

www.srw.com.au/news-media/accessible-groundwater-vital-agriculture-south-west-victoria

www.srw.com.au/news-media/conversations-customers-and-stakeholders

www.srw.com.au/news-media/avocado-grower-strikes-green-and-gold-mornington-peninsula

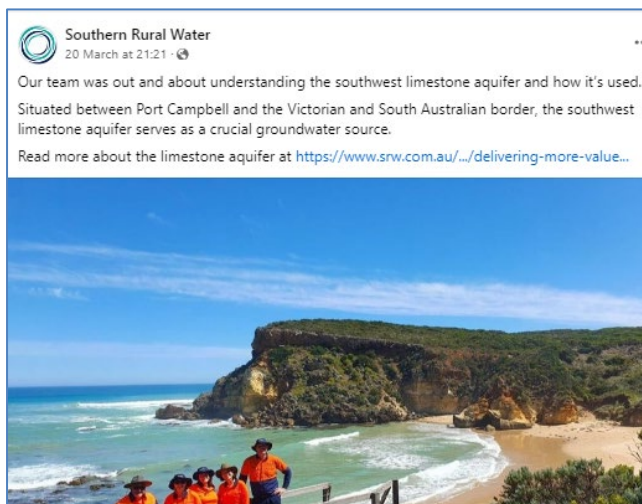
www.srw.com.au/news-media/sustainable-water-use-makes-business-sense-flavorite

www.srw.com.au/news-media/strategic-projects-sustainable-water-future

www.srw.com.au/news-media/new-framework-ensure-fairness-water-entitlement-holders

6. 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.



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

Item No: **8.1**

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: **8.2**

Subject: **Matters referred to the board/board committee.**

Dr Jane Doolan, SRW Board Director, will discuss matters that will be referred to the Board.

Item No: **8.3**

Subject: **2024 Committee workplan**

Southern Rural Water will provide updates to the committee as indicated in the 2024 Committee workplan. Additional items can be added to the agenda at the request of committee members and by SRW to address any current issues or events.

During meetings, the committee can request that items are added to the workplan to ensure that updates on specific topics are provided at key intervals.

The workplan will be included as an agenda item for each meeting.

A copy of the 2024 Committee workplan is included as attachment 8.3.1 for **noting**.

SOUTHERN GROUNDWATER AND RIVERS FORUM ROLLING WORK PLAN

	Requirement	2024				2025				Notes
		FEB	MAY	AUG	NOV	FEB	MAY	AUG	NOV	
Principal & Business Matters	Communications report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Board update	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	GWR Strategic Focus Areas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Report on progress each meeting as part of the Manager GWR update. Update Focus Area's each May.
	Plan for new Financial Year			✓				✓		Plan to address Key Focus Areas
	Groundwater and Rivers Update	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Brief paragraph to update to committee on current projects and issues
Policy and strategic direction	Committee appointments	✓								As required. (Chair and Deputy Chair vote)
	Compliance and Enforcement			✓				✓		EOFY performance
	Climate Outlook and Drought Response Update				✓				✓	
	Corporate Plan			✓		✓		✓		August – Corporate Plan (new plan for noting) February – Discussion – what does the SGRF want to seen in the Corporate Plan. Align with GWR Strategic Focus Areas
Project updates (DEECA and SRW)	SWL Barriers to Trade	✓	✓							Final report to be presented - May 2024
	SWS 4.13 – Small Farm Dams			✓ (update)						Once consultant has been engaged by DEECA
	GM2030									At key project milestones
Admin / Other	Meeting evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	MD to provide verbal update
	Important issues from other customer committees	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	As required
	Matters referred to the committee by the board/board committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Committee Workplan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Item No: **9**

Subject: **General Business**

The Chair will introduce any items of general business.

Item No: **10**

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: **11**

Subject: **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum will be held on Friday 2 August 2024 via MS Teams.

Item No: **12**

Subject: **Close**

The Chair will close the meeting.
