

## Meeting Notes

Meeting	Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting 1
Date	10 December 2024
Project	Water Risks in the Upper Moorabool and Maribyrnong Catchments
Distribution	All, SRW website

## Attendance

Name	Organisation/Representative	Project Role
Matthew Hudson	Southern Rural Water	Project Manager
Elisa Hunter	Southern Rural Water	Project Sponsor
Gemma Abela	Southern Rural Water	Observer
Ross Hardie	Alluvium	SRG Chair
Andrew Little	Alluvium	Project Manager
Ella Guthrie	Alluvium	Project Support
Simon Lang	HARC	Modelling
James Burkitt	Melbourne Water	SRG Member
Helen Van den Berg	Concerned Waterways Alliance	SRG Member
Cameron Haines	Central Highlands Water	SRG Member
Jane Robson	Landowner	SRG Member
Mitchell Cunningham	Moorabool Shire Council	SRG Member
Peter Stray	Landholder/ farmer	SRG Member
Jayden Woolley	Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation	SRG Member
Claire Mennen	Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation	SRG Member
Cameron Steele	People for a Living Moorabool (PALM)	SRG Member
Sharon Blum Caon	Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA)	SRG Member
Brigid Creasey	Barwon Water	SRG Member
Bella Schaffer	Greater Western Water (GWW)	SRG Member
Nicholas Longden	Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH)	SRG Member
Angela Clough	Agriculture Victoria	SRG Member
Ross Colliver	Landholder/landcare	SRG Member
Ken Allender	Landcare/landholder	SRG Member
Charlotte Hilbig	Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	SRG Member
Michael Browne	Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	SRG Member
Nicole Kowalczyk	Maribyrnong Rivers & Waterways Association	SRG Member
Alana Spring	Southern Rural Water	Project Support
Geoffrey Steendam	DEECA	Observer
Rachel Brown	DEECA	Observer

Name	Organisation/Representative	Project Role
<b>Apologies</b>		
Dan Toohey	Farmer	SRG Member
Dr Phillip Jordan	HARC	Modelling/technical lead
Kate Austin	HARC	Modelling lead

## Agenda Items

Item	Topic
1.	<p><u>Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ross gave a welcome and acknowledgement of traditional owners of the lands we meet, of the Moorabool and Maribyrnong catchments, and any individuals that are with us today</li> </ul>
2.	<p><u>Introductions and Housekeeping</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Went around the room and made introductions and explained where everyone is coming from and the groups/ organisations they are representing.</li> </ul>
3.	<p><u>Project Overview</u></p> <p><u>SRW introduction to the project</u></p> <p>The water resources in the Moorabool and Maribyrnong catchments support important social, environmental, cultural and economic values.</p> <p>Climate change, changing land use, and increasing water use is putting pressure on the water resources, and the values that depend on them.</p> <p>There is a need to better understand and manage the cumulative effect of take (particularly unlicensed take) in these catchments.</p> <p><u>Alluvium introduction to the project</u></p> <p>The project will be undertaken in 4 primary stages, with ongoing feedback from the Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG), these stages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collating information on the water uses and the water dependant values in the catchments.</li> <li>Modelling of the impacts of water take on the water resources.</li> <li>A risk assessment of the impacts of water take on the catchment values</li> <li>Identification of options to improve the management of water resources</li> </ul> <p><u>HARC introduction to modelling</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process HARC is undertaking is to develop a database of farm dams in each catchment building on the DELWP 2012 dataset and using supplementary information from the SRG and aerial imagery and water observations from space.</li> <li>This uses existing water resource models of each catchment at level 1 (lumped model). This project will increase the farm dam representation to level 2 (discrete) and have info about type of dam, impact, metadata to represent and get details of individual dams into the water resource models.</li> <li>Groundwater and river water stock and domestic use will also be assessed.</li> <li>SRW and Alluvium will undertake customer surveys to validate usage data.</li> </ul> <p><u>Project deliverables and outcomes</u></p> <p>A set of options for addressing some of the issues and challenges that are identified – not a workplan to deliver those options, which will come at the next phase</p>
4.	<p><u>Rules and Roles</u></p>

Item	Topic
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefing papers will be presented in advance of future meetings. Meeting notes will be published on SRW's website.</li> <li>• Simon Lang is joining today from HARC but at subsequent meetings Dr Phillip Jordan will be joining.</li> <li>• The Terms of reference have been provided to the group. These were briefly discussed.</li> </ul>
5.	<u>Tea Break</u>
6.	<p data-bbox="428 531 1333 585">Members of the SRG were given an opportunity to voice their aspirations for the project, articulating what they hoped to see it achieve. The themes that were described included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a desire to better understand water quality and quantity impacts, how much is being taken and what is happening. Including impacts on runoff affecting flows in rivers/waterways above and below storages, as well as how affected inflows into storages impact on allocations.</li> <li>• There was a feeling that farm dams and water use is increasing, and a hope that this project would help address this.</li> <li>• There was a recognition of the increase in density of peri-urban areas and risks posed.</li> <li>• It was noted that evaporation is a large impact in addition to water use.</li> <li>• There was concern about the apparent unrestricted growth in farm dams.</li> <li>• SRG members were keen to fill gaps in data.</li> <li>• There was a desire to build a more holistic approach to waterway management and to include cultural values</li> </ul>
7.	<p data-bbox="399 1014 570 1035"><u>Project feedback</u></p> <p data-bbox="383 1056 1349 1325">The chair reflected on the discussions and the aspirations in Item 6 and the feedback on the project approach. The chair noted the range of issues and aspirations and welcomed the communication of issues and the potential for opportunities that can come out of this. This project provided an opportunity for a better understanding of risks and opportunities across the broader community. The chair noted the SRG's view on the importance of the modelling work, and the influence of climate change, and that the modelling could enable a separation of the impact of farm dams (and other use) from the impact of climate change. The importance of understanding surface water/groundwater interactions was highlighted, noting the challenges with modelling.</p>
8.	<p data-bbox="399 1346 748 1367"><u>Feedback on the project approach</u></p> <p data-bbox="399 1381 1317 1436">A summary of questions and feedback raised during the meeting, including feedback from breakout groups, is provided at the end of these notes.</p>
9.	<p data-bbox="399 1457 591 1478"><u>Next steps/Actions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SRW will work to try to get more farmer representation on the group.</li> <li>2. SRW, with support from DEECA, will develop a summary of key legislation/policy/application and provide/present this to the SRG.</li> <li>3. Alluvium/SRW will provide the data collation outputs to SRG for feedback.</li> <li>4. HARC offered to provide a modelling presentation prior the modelling SRG meeting, SRW to confirm.</li> <li>5. SRW/Alluvium will undertake user surveys on stock and domestic use.</li> <li>6. SRG confirmed that they wanted to keep the following meetings in person wherever possible and in Bacchus Marsh. Future meeting dates will be scheduled by SRW after the Christmas break.</li> </ol>
10.	<u>Meeting Close</u>

## Questions and Answers

These key questions raised, and the responses provided in the meeting have been summarised below.

Theme	Question	Response
Drivers	Moorabool is the most flow stressed in Vic, needs to be acknowledged, FLOWS study looked at aspirational targets, hope there is not a line in the sand about where the catchment is at the moment – not just look at current values but consider where we have come from and where we are going	Comment noted
Climate change	Would like to outline the fact that climate change is a risk in the catchment, and we are currently seeing the impacts	Comment noted.
Modelling	What is the level of uncertainty with model?	Data and modelling uncertainty were acknowledged and will be clearly presented. User surveys will be helpful in validating modelling assumptions. Modelling aspects were discussed by HARC.
Modelling	PALM have their own dataset, is there any way their own dataset can be used to validate the existing dataset that HARC are developing	The PALM dataset has been reviewed and referenced. The project team will present the data collation outputs to SRG to provide an opportunity for feedback/ improvements.
Modelling	Depth in farm dam modelling is a subject of uncertainty – how is this managed	Yes, this a point of uncertainty, there are ways to validate through lidar and to inform this via validation, HARC will report on previous, current and possible future coverage of farm dams.
Purpose of the SRG	Alluvium has the role of chair, how do we ensure independence, are there any thoughts on maintaining adjudication of questions and comments	Purpose of SRG is to gain feedback and there is not necessarily a goal of consensus, if there is a diversity of opinion it is welcome. Project papers, meeting notes and reports are intended to be made available on SRW's website.
Policy/ legislative context	Can information be provided on the legislative framework, how it is implemented and what documents drive the decisions made in these catchments	It was agreed that this is an essential piece of information, including the legislation & policy context, and how a waterway is defined. How it is interpreted, what is the legislation around FDs, how is it interpreted and currently implemented. This is noted and will be progressed by SRW.
SRG membership	Lots of pro waterways members, less agricultural/ farm dams/Domestic & stock users – is there enough diversity in the SRG?	The SRG selection process was described. SRW acknowledged this issue and confirmed they will continue to work to get more farmer representation on the group. There will be opportunities in later stages of the project in sharing opportunities and through validation engagement.
Project objectives	A lot of the focus is on farm dams, are there other aspects of the water system that are of interest to this project	Other stock and domestic and unauthorised licenced take will be included, and included in the water resource modelling
Policy/ legislative context	A Flow chart of legislative/policy complexities was suggested, as a means to	This will be considered by SRW and the team as part of the action.

	communicate and develop water literacy amongst the broader community	
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Project feedback session: Summary of themes discussed:

**What do you think will work well with the project approach, what we could improve?**

*Common themes: Overall the approach was welcomed. Key themes included; Building a strong narrative, communication, understanding the situation, demystifying policy/legislation. Some concerns over the likelihood of future change actually happening, and a desire for the project to include prioritisation/recommendations.*

**What inputs, such as local knowledge, data or documentation could help inform the work?**

*Common themes: Understand the story that modelling is telling in the context of the on ground assessment, acknowledging limitations in modelling technically but also as a communication tool if time is not spent bringing people up to speed. Several specific projects were mentioned and will be followed up.*

**What do you see as risks to the successful delivery of the project?**

*Common themes: Identifying most at risk flow periods (including both annual and seasonal timeframes), policy definitions, lack of confidence in the modelling, other factors that affect runoff, overloading the project team, and the potential for scope creep, project not being fully representative given the lack of landholders taking the offer of SRG membership*