

Meeting Notes

Meeting	Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting 6
Date	16 December 2025
Project	Water Risks in the Upper Moorabool and Maribyrnong Catchments
Distribution	All, SRW website

1. Attendance

Name	Organisation/Representative	Project Role
Matthew Hudson	Southern Rural Water	Project Manager
Alana Spring	Southern Rural Water	Project Support
Gemma Abela	Southern Rural Water	Comms and Engagement
Joan Hodgson	Southern Rural Water	Project Support
Rebecca Klein	Alluvium	Chair
Andrew Little	Alluvium	Project Manager
Alex Shen	Alluvium	Project Support
Phillip Jordan	HARC	Modelling
Dan Toohey	Farmer	SRG Member
Angela Clough	Agriculture Victoria	SRG Member
Cameron Steele	People for a Living Moorabool	SRG Member
Nicole Kowalczyk	Maribyrnong RWA	SRG Member
Ross Colliver	Landholder/Landcare	SRG Member
James Burkitt	Melbourne Water	SRG Member
Jake van Dam	CCMA	SRG Member
Jared Scott	Barwon Water	SRG Member
Michael Browne	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung	SRG Member
Anna Teuchler	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung	SRG Member
Bella Schaffer	GWV	SRG Member
Jayden Woolley	Wadawurrung TO Association	SRG Member
Scott Young	VFF/ Landowner	SRG Member
Ken Allender	Landcare/landholder	SRG Member
Peter Stray	Landholder/ farmer	SRG Member
Naomi Douglas	DEECA	Observer
Geoffrey Steendam	DEECA	Observer
Apologies		
Helen Van den Berg	Concerned Waterways Alliance	SRG Member
Cameron Haines	CHW	SRG Member
Mitchell Cunningham	Moorabool Shire Council	SRG Member
Charles Everist	Landholder	SRG Member
Sharon Blum Caon	CCMA (ret.)	SRG Member
Jane Robson	Landowner	SRG Member
Brigid Creasey	Barwon Water	SRG Member

Name	Organisation/Representative	Project Role
Lisa Duncan	Melbourne Water	SRG Member
Anna May	DEECA	Observer
Alex Murray	DEECA	Observer
Rachel Brown	DEECA	Observer
Nicholas Longden	DEECA	Observer

2. Agenda Items

Item	Topic
1.	Welcome and Acknowledgement of country
2.	Recap on drivers and objectives
3.	Initial feedback on draft report
4.	Next steps
5.	Meeting close

3. Meeting notes:

Acknowledgement & Agenda Overview

Rebecca Klein gave an acknowledgement of Country, and then the meeting agenda was presented.

Recap on drivers and objectives

Andrew Little gave a recap on the drivers, scope, and objectives of the project with particular focus on the Action 4-13 of the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy.

Several members of the SRG felt that the report should include broader context, highlighting the story of the rivers, and the story behind the changes in flow, which is bigger than just the impact of farm dams. These comments were noted by SRW and the project team and will be addressed in the final report.

Members of the SRG asked whether the report will be published on the SRW website or the DEECA website. SRW advised that the report will be finalised by mid, with publication to follow at a later date (potentially linked to any public responses by DECCA and SRW).

Initial feedback on draft report

Modelling

HARC provided a summary of the modelling work, including the scenarios and results for both the Maribyrnong and Moorabool catchments. The question was asked if location names and catchment names could be added to the maps in the report. HARC confirmed this could be easily added.

A question was asked regarding how the farm dam data and outputs would be published and made accessible to the public. DEECA advised that further consideration will be given to how best to make the data available including whether existing platforms are suitable. It was also noted that the report diagrams will be important visual aids to illustrate the outcomes of the project and that telling the story is important.

Some SRG members commented that the role that farm dams play in reducing stream flows should be clearly highlighted and acknowledged. In particular some members requested to see a clearer statement regarding the impacts of farm dams into the future if recent growth rates in farm dams continues. Other SRG members were concerned that this would be perceived as a forecast.

There was some discussion regarding modelling uncertainty, and it was acknowledged that assumptions need to be underpinned by robust data and clearly explained.

Values and risk assessment recap

Alluvium presented on the project approach to identifying values and the risk assessment methodology. The SRG commented that changes to public water supply arrangements and environmental entitlement may play a future role in supporting some of the values and asked whether this was not incorporated in the risk assessment. This discussion progressed to the approach of the risk assessment and modelling, and how detailed scenarios like these were out of scope. The project focus was to understand how small catchment dams were impacting water dependant values.

It was noted by some members of the SRG that there is a lack of mention of agriculture as an important value to the catchment, currently it is presented largely as a risk. These comments were noted by SRW and the project team and will be addressed in the final report.

A question was raised on whether the study could assess flow impacts and risks at a reach scale. HARC advised that there are modelled outputs at a sub-catchment scale. It was also commented that the draft State Waterway Management Strategy identifies river sections requiring the greatest attention, providing an opportunity for reach assessment. SRW agreed to consider the opportunity.

One SRG member noted that the environmental flows studies used in the risk assessment process (for environmental risks) are effective at identifying water requirements and supporting water delivery, they are less effective at identifying environmental risks. The SRG member suggested that the report needs to be strengthened, with clearer links made between flow outcomes, environmental stress, and ecosystem impacts.

Management opportunities

A recap was given on the management opportunities developed by the SRG, largely grouped into themes with reference made to the draft report. It was noted by the SRG that a prioritisation process is needed to rank the identified opportunities, as there are currently 61 listed. This will be considered in future stages however was not in the scope of this work.

There was a concern that the potential opportunities for developing Water Supply Projection Areas are not adequately reflected in the document. It is noted that one of the management opportunities (Opportunity 9) does refer to Water Supply Projection Areas.

It was also highlighted that an important gap existed between planning bodies and local councils. Local councils should be involved to clarify responsibilities and respond to the urgency of the process, with early engagement needed to stay ahead of emerging issues.

One member of the SRG expressed disappointment that the farm dam compliance issues and outcomes (SRW operational program) was not included in the report. SRW noted this and will consider a response to this project report (once finalised) including ongoing compliance activity.

Next steps

Matt Hudson from SRW provided a summary of next steps. This included the following steps to complete the report:

- (i) Alluvium collating the comments provided by the SRG on the draft report at the meeting
- (ii) SRW collating any written comments provided by the SRG, with an extended deadline of February 13 (following a request from SRG members)
- (iii) The report will be updated and finalised by mid-March

- (iv) The meeting notes from SRG6 will be posted on SRW's website along with the Final Report

After the report is completed then DEECA and SRW, along with other agencies, will take some time to properly review the report and consider next steps, including any potential public response. The response will consider how to further evaluate the opportunities that relate specifically to the Moorabool and Maribyrnong, in addition to opportunities that relate more broadly.

At the SRG meeting the SRG were keen to understand how they can continue to be involved. SRW and DEECA recognise the valuable contribution from the SRG and the opportunity to continue this dialogue will be considered as a part of the Agency and DEECA response.

Meeting closed at approximately 11:50am