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Southern Rural Water

Macalister Customer Consultative Committee

Agenda and Papers
Meeting No.210

Tuesday 24 February 2026

10:00am - SRW Maffra Office

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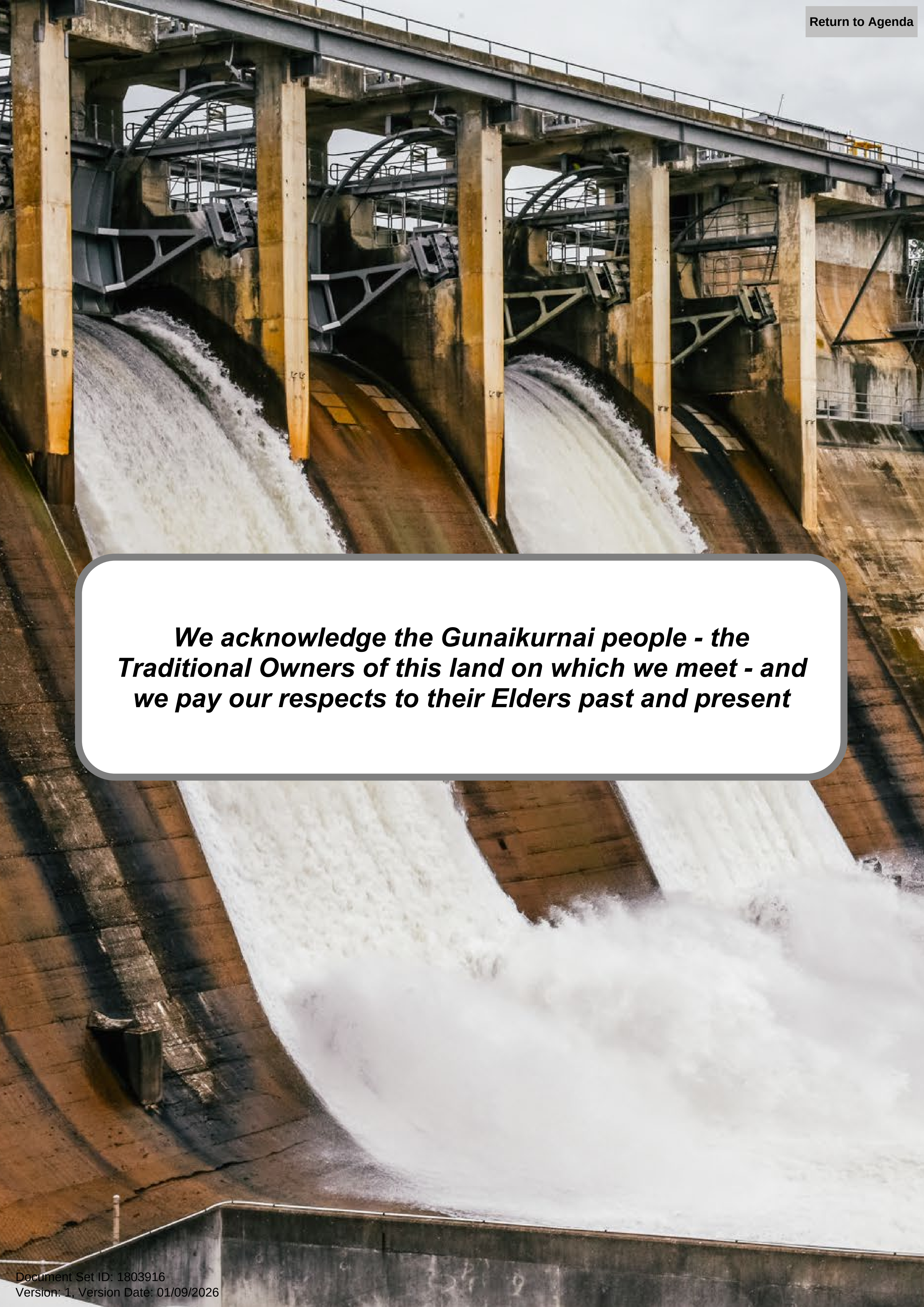

We acknowledge the Gunaikurnai people - the Traditional Owners of this land on which we meet - and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present

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 Rural Water

Macalister Customer Consultative Committee

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday 24 February 2026	10am – 12pm	SRW Maffra Office 88 Johnson Street

Agenda

		Topic		
1		Acknowledgement of County	*Chair*	10:00am
2		Welcome and Apologies	*Chair*	10:05am
	2.1	Introduction to new attendees	*Chair*	
3		Declaration of conflicts of interest	*All*	10:10am
4		Confirmation of Minutes: Meetings 209	*Chair*	10:15am
	4.1	*Attachment – Minutes Meeting No.209 - 25 November 2025*		
5		Business Arising from previous meetings	*Chair*	10:20am
	5.1	*Attachment – MCCC Business Arising Report*		
6		For Noting: Communications Report	*Chair*	10:25am
	6.1	*Attachment – Communications Report February 2026*		
7	**COMMITTEE MATTERS – UPDATES**			
	7.1	Important issues from other Customer Committees	*Rachel Lunn*	10:30am
	7.2	Matters referred by/to the Board/Board Committee	*Scott Cornish*	10:40am
8	**SRW UPDATE – STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS**			
	8.1	Overview: Corporate Plan and Pricing Submission	*Craig Smith*	10:50am
		BREAK		

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9	**SRW UPDATE – OPERATIONAL MATTERS**			
	9.1	Update: Water Supply East	*Renee Wicks*	11:05am
	9.2	Update: Operations and Compliance - East	*Russell Tomlin*	11:20am
	9.3	Round Table: Meet the Team - Water Supply East	*Renee Wicks*	11:25am
10	**GENERAL BUSINESS**			
	10.1	Update: Recruitment	*Matt Cook*	11:45am
	10.2	Customer Consultative Committee Handbook	*Rachel Lunn*	
	10.3	Update: Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Framework	*Rachel Lunn*	
11	Round Table – any other matters		*Chair*	11:50am
12	Meeting evaluation		*All*	11:55am
13	Next meeting – Tuesday 26 May 2026		*Chair*	
14	Close		*Chair*	12:00pm

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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: **2.1**

Subject: **Introduction to new attendees and**

The Chair and Rachel Lunn (SRW) will introduce the new attendees at the 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.

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Item No: **4**

Subject: **Confirmation of Minutes – Meeting 209**

Action: **For approval**

Author: **Lauren Gourlay – Executive Assistant**

Date: **20/02/2026**

PURPOSE

1. To ensure that the minutes taken of committee meeting 209 are an accurate and sufficient record of discussions held and decisions made at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That the committee **approves** the minutes of Meeting 209 held on Tuesday 25 November 2025.

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 209, held at the SRW Maffra office on Tuesday 25 November 2025 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. Members 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.

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Macalister Customer Consultative Committee

Minutes of Meeting 209

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday 25 November 2025	10:00am	SRW Maffra Office

Present	
Mr Benn Thexton	Committee Chair
Mr Christopher Van Den Dikkenberg	Committee Member
Mr James Clyne	Committee Member
Mr Bernard Coleman	Committee Member
Mr Tim Missen	Committee Member
In Attendance	
Mr Cameron FitzGerald	Managing Director, SRW
Ms Rachel Lunn	General Manager Service Delivery, SRW
Mr Matt Cook	Manger Strategic Projects and Service Optimisation
Ms Renee Wicks	Manager Water Supply East, SRW
Mrs Lauren Gourlay	Executive Assistant, SRW (minutes - online)
Guests	
Ms Penny Winbanks	Manager Statutory Functions, SRW
Mr Peter Hahnemann	Project Manager, MacFresh
Apologies	
Ms Kate Lamb	Committee Member
Mr Brad White	Committee Member
Mr Warrick Purdon	Committee Member
Mr Mark Coleman	Committee Member
Mr Thomas Dwyer	Committee Member (apology not received)

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1. Acknowledgement of County

Mr Benn Thexton, MCCC 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.

Ms Rachel Lunn, SRW's new General Manager Service Delivery was introduced to the committee members and Rachel provided an overview of her experience.

Mrs Lauren Gourlay, Executive Assistant, was introduced to the committee members and the change in personnel within SRW was explained. Lauren thanked the group for their welcome.

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 208

The minutes of meeting 208 were **approved.**

Moved: Mr James Clyne **Second:** Mr Bernard Coleman

5. Business Arising

The report was taken as read and status comments noted.

Outstanding actions were addressed:

- Ms Renee Wicks' contact details were circulated
- Ms Penny Winbanks will be attending this meeting to discuss groundwater transfer processes

The committee noted the next steps for the outstanding actions have been addressed and accept them as closed.

6. New and Continuing Committee Members and SRW Appointments

Rachel noted for the minutes her appointment to the General Manager Service Delivery role, offering her thanks to Simon Wilkinson and Hayley Taylor for their time with the committee.

Lauren provided an update on the committee recruitment campaign and confirmed two applications received and the process will be followed with The Chair.

Mr Matt Cook noted he had spoken to all current members of the Committee and confirmed their intent to continue on in their roles. The only member not yet reached was

Mr Mark Coleman, who is on leave. Matt noted he will contact Mark when he returns from leave.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Follow up on membership process with Chair – in line with processes set out in the committee handbook	L. GOURLAY M. COOK	28/02/2026

7. Updates and Information Sharing

7.1 Groundwater Transfer Process Improvement

Ms Penny Winbanks, Manager Statutory Functions, provided a paper for reading prior to the meeting, which the Committee confirmed was done.

Providing an overview of the groundwater transfer process improvement update, Penny noted:

- The presentation and information offered today is in response to some of the queries noted in the previous MCCC meeting.
- There are two licences required in Vic to allow an individual or business to legally hold a water entitlement and use for defined purposes – a 'take and use' licence under s51 and the licence issued under s67.
- Rachel advised that, generally, the policies and obligations are set, however the State Government has indicated they will be looking to review current policies and update them.
- Reference was made to the Groundwater Prices and Forms page of the SRW website

The Chair noted his concern was the application for temporary transfer that was submitted in December 2024; a response was not received until August 2025 and wanted to know what the delay was. There was concern as to why it has taken so long to address and who the key contact is to reach out to for status updates.

The committee also noted frustrations of having to follow up on applications previously submitted and the difficulty trying to speak to someone within SRW to find out what is happening or receive an update is the continued source of frustration for many customers.

Rachel noted that when applications get complicated, there is a sense of 'who does this go to' and there is a need to address internal processes and improve our service. Rachel requested that the committee members direct their queries to her in order to understand the issue and address the pain points of SRW processes.

Rachel then requested a specificity of examples as to where the pain points are and that she is open to conversations with customers to address the issues. Mr Cameron

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FitzGerald confirmed there are clear and current cases to use as reference points (those raised by James and Benn in the meeting today).

The committee noted the key issue is always the communication from SRW and having to chase the organisation to provide an update on any issue that has been brought forward.

Rachel noted that part of Matt's new role as Manager Strategic Projects and Service Optimisation is to address these issues and identify areas for significant improvement.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Discuss option for a temporary working group with key customers that have raised issues. Develop improvement plans to bring to next scheduled committee meeting	R. LUNN C. FITZGERALD P. WINBANKS M. COOK	28/02/2026

7.2 Water Supply East Customer and Community Update

Ms Renee Wicks, Manager Water Supply East, provided an update on the season to date, highlighting:

- Mag H program was rolled out on 17 November and will conclude on Friday 28 November.
- Currently in a spill – minimal irrigation orders at the moment as private dams are mostly full.
- Weed spraying has been put on hold due to the weather conditions.
- Boisdale leaks have been repaired and whilst the conditions are relatively quiet, servicing and maintenance continues to be rolled out in preparation for the peak season kick off.
- Mr Peter Miller has returned from long service leave, in addition to two trainees who are with SRW for the next two years. There has also been a number of new staff who have been recruited to the team and are continually learning on the job and picking up the requirements of the roles.

Cameron acknowledged the turnover of staff and the experience that has left the organisation has offered up a challenge to continuing the high level of service - but has the utmost confidence that the new hires are picking things up very quickly and is aligning to the preferred culture of the organisation.

The committee noted the spill and requested a current figure. Renee confirmed the total volume able to be spilt is 62,000 and we have currently spilt ~50,000. It was noted by the committee that the deadline of 15 December is fast approaching.

The committee also noted the environmental flow was released and then the spill was called – whilst the community may have had questions as to why this was done,

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the committee noted this was a great call for SRW and applauded the decision-making process and result.

7.3 MacAvon Update

Mr Peter Hahnemann, Project Manager MacFresh, joined the meeting to provide an update on the status of the Avon Valley Water Security Project.

Before this, Cameron reconfirmed that previous discussions on whether the MacAvon upgrade was the right pathway and that the committee had agreed that expanding the district was not the right move until the current system is working at optimal capability. The presentation to be discussed is predicated on the Macalister Fresh and where this progress currently sits.

Providing a brief update on the Macalister Fresh consultation paper, Peter noted the delay in engagement with customers is due to DEECA and Board feedback on the strategy as it had been developed. The content is currently in redevelopment to communicate the best message for the district and the intent of the organisation.

As a result of this feedback, the project delivery has been extended to 2026. The near-term goals in terms of better communication and the development of Matt Cook's role have both been built into the project plan and longer-term strategy.

Peter then moved to discuss the update on the Avon Valley Water Security Project. The detailed business case is due to be completed in December 2026, with the Communications and Engagement plan underway. There will be an engagement window where the project team will reconnect with Avon Valley landholders with updates.

There was discussion regarding on-farm and balancing storages and Peter noted the technical studies scheduled for 2026 will address the questions of environmental flows into the Avon.

Peter then noted the recent water auction on the Latrobe river and the interest flagged as part of the EOI process. 4,370ML was auctioned on 28 October 2025 across 25 lots. SRW is now working with customers and referral agencies to issue licenses.

Cameron supplemented the discussion with an update on the process and reasoning for the auction process and that the approach taken will ensure all licence holders are on equal footing and operate on the same rules.

7.4 Upcoming Customer Service Continuous Improvement Actions

Matt discussed the improvement actions that are currently underway. As discussed earlier in the meeting, communication to customers during times of full storage and 100% HRWS and additional LWRS.

Matt noted and The Chair concurred that the key is to avoid the same issues that happened in 2022/23 and 2023/24 and that learnings from both instances have SRW in a better position this time around and what to expect in times of peak demand is known and prepared for.

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8. PRINCIPAL MATTERS - FOR DISCUSSION

8.1 Future Strategy and Policy

Rachel noted the discussions that were held at the recent Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum (SGRF) and that the consensus of the committee was that the forum be used to provide input on the organisation's strategy and also how to address policy reform and offer feedback to DEECA and other governing bodies.

Rachel then noted there was an opportunity to offer this committee the same opportunity, to which the committee members were very happy to accept and discuss further.

8.2 2026 Committee Workplan

Noting the previous discussions on opportunities for reshaping the future discussions, the committee noted there may be a change in the workplan that will be addressed in future meetings.

Further to this, Cameron and Rachel suggested placeholders be added to calendars for December and January 2026 if needed to address development of communications to irrigators in the case of a full storage and a dry summer resulting in delayed deliveries to irrigators.

9. PRINCIPLE MATTERS - FOR NOTING

9.1 Water Supply East Update

The report was taken as read. The committee advised the report is beneficial and highlighted the importance of having information available when customers need or want it.

10. COMMITTEE MATTERS

10.1 Roundtable discussion

The committee members noted there have been some significant discussion had throughout the meeting and that it's been a very busy year, but overall, the progress has been pleasing.

10.2 Important issues from other customer committees

Rachel provided a recap of the SGRF discussion and the preference for the group to be move involved in discussions that are fed back through to DEECA to support development of policy and matters that impact customers.

Rachel also noted the committee were keen to hold a forum in the middle of the year that all members could attend, whether online or in person, where everyone can be in the room to share ideas. This was something to consider for future meeting discussions.

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10.3 Matter referred by/to the Board/Board Committee.

Cameron noted the Board was in a period of renewal with the addition of three new members. The onboarding is holding up the Macalister Fresh work however it is critical a fully united Board is present to move the project forward without hold up.

Cameron also discussed the work already underway to prepare for the upcoming pricing submission and that the engagement plan is in full swing. Invites for key meetings will be sent to the committee in the coming six months to discuss the right pricing points and key areas of development. The Price Sub project team will be reaching out in due course.

11. GENERAL BUSINESS

There was no other business raised by the members.

12. Meeting evaluation

The Chair invited members to ask any further questions to ensure they were equipped to discuss matters with customers. No clarifications were required.

13. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Macalister Customer Consultative Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 24 February 2026 at SRW’s Maffra Office.

14. Close

With no further business the meeting was declared closed at 12:08pm.

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Item No: **5**

Subject: **Business arising from previous meetings**

Action: **For noting**

Author: **Lauren Gourlay – Executive Assistant**

Date: **20/02/2026**

PURPOSE

1. To allow the forum to assess management progress on items identified for action from Macalister Customer Consultative Committee meetings.

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

- **Five** action items have been completed.
- **One** action remains in progress

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 - MCCC

Action progress: Complete

Action		Source	Due date	Completed date	Accountable officer	Status comment
35784	Circulate Renee Wicks' contacted details with the draft minutes.	Macalister Customer Consultative Committee, 26 August 2025 - Agenda Item 2 Welcome and Apologies	28/08/25	28/08/25	Hayley Taylor	Details provided with August draft minutes
35785	Review processes and information available to customers to understand criteria for different groundwater amounts being transferred.	Macalister Customer Consultative Committee, 26 August 2025 - Agenda Item 5 Business Arising	28/06/25	18/11/25	Penny Winbanks	This action will be covered in the presentation and discussion to the group at the meeting in Nov 2026
35786	Invite Penny Winbanks, Manager Statutory Functions to attend the next meeting to discuss the groundwater transfer process and understand area's where communication can be improved.	Macalister Customer Consultative Committee, 26 August 2025 - Agenda Item 5 Business Arising	28/06/25	07/11/25	Penny Winbanks, Hayley Taylor	Penny attended Meeting 209 held on 25 November 2025 to present on and discuss the transfer process. This was documented in the meeting minutes.
35787	Provide the MCCC with further information on the payment plan and reminder process.	Macalister Customer Consultative Committee, 26 August 2025 - Agenda Item 5 Business Arising	28/06/25	19/11/25	Renee Wicks	The process for payment plans and reminders is detailed in the Water Supply East Customers and Community update paper that will be included in the papers for the 25 November MCCC Meeting.
65815	Follow up on membership process with Chair – in line with processes set out in the committee handbook.	Macalister Customer Consultative Committee - 25 November 2025 - Agenda Item 6 Committee Members and SRW Appointments	28/06/25	28/02/26	Matt Cook	Matt Cook and Rachel Lunn met with MCCC Benn Thexton to discuss membership applictions. Update to be provided at February 2026 meeting.

Action progress: Overdue

Action		Source	Due date	Completed date	Accountable officer	Status comment
65816	Discuss option for a temporary working group with key customers that have raised issues. Develop improvement plans to bring to next scheduled committee meeting.	Macalister Customer Consultative Committee - 25 November 2025 - Agenda Item 7 Updates and Information Sharing	28/06/25		Penny Winbanks, Matt Cook, Rachel Lunn	Due to the recruitment of a new MD, this action is on hold. Due date extended to end of March and will be reviewed prior to the Q2 meeting.

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Item No: **6.1**

Subject: **Communications and Engagement report – February 2026**

Action: **For noting**

Author: **Lauren Gourlay - Executive Assistant**

Date: **19/02/2026**

PURPOSE

To update the Macalister Customer Consultative Committee 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. Website

Southern Rural Water has produced a range of website content for the Macalister area. There has also been updates on activity at the recreational areas, information on current projects and regular updates on the seasonal conditions.

https://www.srw.com.au/news-media/music-milking-how-tom-gannon-found-his-groove-dairying
https://www.srw.com.au/news-media/seasonal-outlook-mixed-weather-likely-across-australia
https://www.srw.com.au/news-media/blue-rock-plantings-take-place-2027
https://www.srw.com.au/news-media/latrobe-river-farmers-score-more-water-through-online-auction
https://www.srw.com.au/news-media/reaping-rewards-regenerative-dairy-farming-gippsland

5. Advice, help and support for customers and farmers

SRW continues to publish social media content and new articles on our platforms that provide customers with information on support services including technical, financial and wellbeing. The social media posts link customers to the SRW website for further information.

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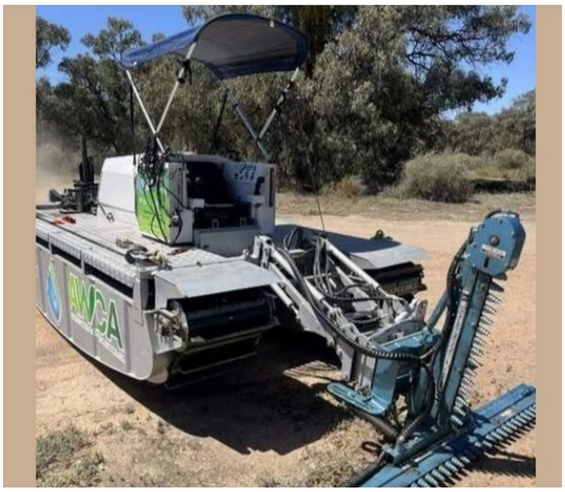
6. Social media

Our social media posts continue to receive good response rates. Below are examples of content since the last meeting. Please follow our social media pages to see more.

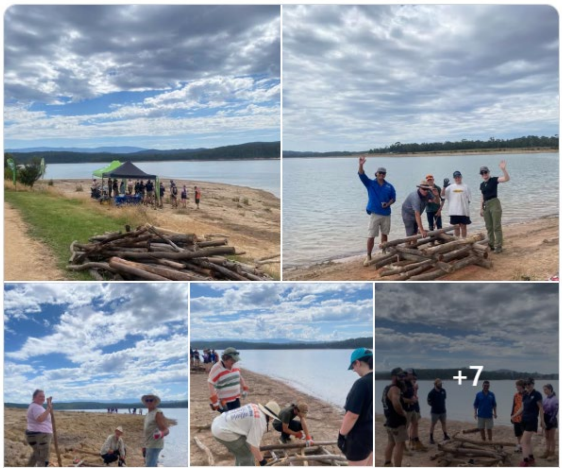
Southern Rural Water
February 11 at 9:53 AM ·

Meet the aquatic harvester who's been hard at work across the Macalister Irrigation District, weeding out the problem. ... See more



Southern Rural Water
February 10 at 11:52 AM ·

It was great to see so many people at Blue Rock Lake over the weekend, getting hands-on and building fish homes to support native fish. Thank you to the volunteers and organisations who got involved, it's a great example of what can be achieved when we work together.

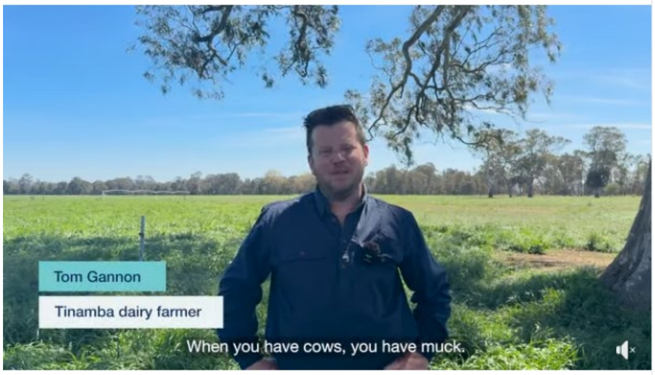


Southern Rural Water
February 9 at 10:48 AM ·

When you milk a lot of cows, you end up with a lot of muck that must go somewhere.

Dairy farmer Tom Gannon has set up a reuse system that captures the dairy wash-down waste and rainwater and puts it back onto pasture through irrigation. It's helped cut waste, save on fertiliser costs, and make better use of water already on the farm.

Watch how it works and read Tom's full story at https://www.srw.com.au/.../music-milking-how-tom-gannon...



Southern Rural Water
December 23, 2025 ·

Imagine going to school and having lessons that involve feeding cows, getting dirt under your nails, or learning from an agronomist.

Well, it's a reality for kids at Boisdale Consolidated School and we're proud to provide sponsorship to support their farm program.

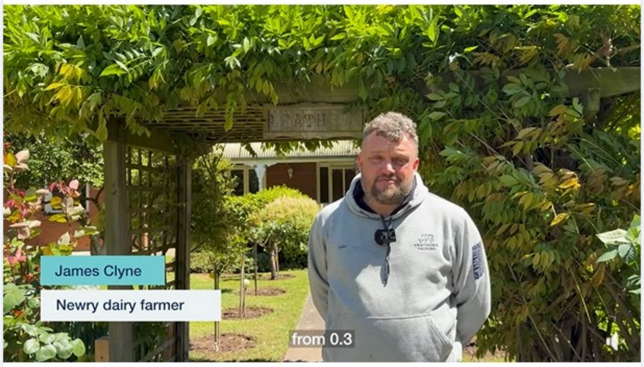
Read more at https://www.srw.com.au/.../teaching-tomorrows-farmers-today

#FutureFarmers #AgricultureEducation #SchoolFarm #FarmEducation #AgInTheClassroom #NextGenerationFarmers

10 714 views

Southern Rural Water
December 3, 2025 ·

James Clyne is one of around 30 farmers to benefit from improved farming efficiencies and water savings thanks to the Newry pipeline we completed in February 2024. ... See more



22 1 comment 2.2K views

Like Comment Share

Southern Rural Water
November 21, 2025 ·

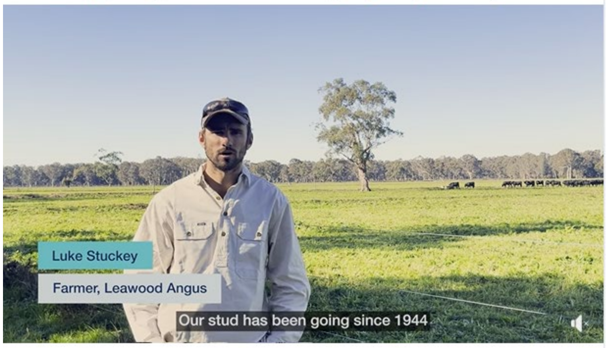
Today on National Agriculture Day we celebrate the farmers and regional communities who work tirelessly to grow our food, care for the land, and keep our towns and industries thriving.

A great example is Luke Stuckey, a third-generation Angus breeder from Gippsland. Luke runs his family's Leawood Angus Stud with care, smart farming practices, and a focus on sustainability.

His advice for other young farmers? Find a mentor. "It could be a neighbour down the road. If they're doing something differently, just ask why - you'll learn a lot from them," he says.

Read more about Luke at https://www.srw.com.au/.../secure-latrobe-river-water...

#NationalAgDay #YoungFarmers #SustainableFarming #RegionalAg #Mentorship



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Committee Matters

Discussion

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Item No: **7.1**

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

Rachel Lunn, General Manager Service Delivery, will provide a general update of conversations held from the recent Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum

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Item No: **7.2**

Subject: **Matters referred by/to the Board/Board Committees**

Scott Cornish, Acting Managing Director, will be in attendance and provide a general update from Board perspective.

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Strategic Discussions

Update and Round Table

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Item No: **8.1**

Subject: **Corporate Plan and Pricing Submission Update**

Craig Smith, Manager Strategy and Business Planning will provide a presentation to the Committee on the corporate plan and pricing submission preparations underway at Southern Rural Water.

The presentation will cover the purpose of the pricing submission, where the input from committee members will be critical and the pathway of engagement.

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Operational Matters

Updates & Discussion

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Item No:	**9.1**
Subject:	**Water Supply East – Update**
Action:	**For noting**
Author:	**Renee Wicks, Manager Water Supply East**
Date:	**19/02/2026**

2025 / 26 Focus Areas – Water Supply East
• Enhance channel capacity through targeted infrastructure trials • Modernise weed-management practices to improve channel flow and reduce maintenance burden • Payload Program - Year 3 of trial • Supporting decommissioning of historical and unsafe MID Assets

Water Supply East	
Project and Program Matters	**Update Notes**
Storage and Inflow Data	As at 16 February 2026, Lake Glenmaggie holds 120,189 ML (66% full). This is slightly higher than the 115,024 ML stored at the same time last year, but still below the 10-year early-February average of 124,713 ML (70%). Inflows remain very low with natural inflows from the Macalister River at Stringybark Creek and Glenmaggie Creek were 70 ML/day, with a 7-day average of 77 ML/day. So far this season, cumulative inflows total 1,227 ML, compared with the 10-year average of 4,196 ML, confirming that catchment inflows are materially lower than normal. Allocations remain unchanged, with: • 100% High Reliability Water (HRWS) • 0% Low Reliability Water (LRWS) This setting reflects the limited inflows entering Lake Glenmaggie and the need to meet both HRWS delivery requirements and environmental release obligations. These demands are restricting the volume available for any LRWS allocation at this time. We will continue to review the allocation position fortnightly.
Delivery Update	This season we have continued to see strong customer outcomes, with irrigators reporting noticeably shorter wait

	times, smoother flow rates, and more reliable service delivery compared with previous years. Operational observations support this feedback, with improved flow stability and fewer delivery disruptions across key parts of the network. One recent example illustrates this sentiment: *“Just a quick note to say the order I had nearly 2 weeks ago was the best executed of the season. The flow rate was lovely and smooth, sitting around the 7.5 ML for most of the event. Talking with a few others, you may have had a pump going to make this happen.”* This type of feedback reinforces that customers are experiencing more consistent supply performance and recognising the operational effort contributing to improved delivery outcomes this season. Alongside the positive customer results, current delivery efficiency is tracking at 86%, consistent with where we finished last season. While our seasonal target is 90%, the repeated result of 86% suggests this is becoming our effective baseline under the current operating conditions.
On Ground Maintenance Update	In addition to our planned maintenance program, including weed control, access-track maintenance, and ongoing infrastructure upkeep the season always presents a reactive operating environment due to unforeseen challenges. These unplanned events require timely response to maintain service delivery and system stability. During the quarter, extreme heat drove high water demand, resulting in wait times of up to 10 days in some areas. This was influenced by high order volumes, last-minute order changes that reduced scheduling efficiency, and a rain event that altered ordered demand across the district. We also managed several asset-related issues, including five leaks on the Boisdale pipeline and twelve channel breaches. These breaches occurred due to factors such as channel-bank erosion, majority from cattle damage, and weed intrusion, contributing to water loss and reactive field work. A significant operational event occurred at Wilsons Run, where a Flume Gate gearbox failure left the gate fully open and required urgent intervention. If not addressed promptly, this could have created supply and flooding risks under current high-flow conditions. A coordinated effort by Maintenance, Technology, and Planning teams enabled the damaged gate to be removed and a temporary replacement installed quickly, preventing water loss and avoiding any customer impacts. Although this was an unusual incident, the rapid, safe, and effective response highlighted the team’s capability in

	managing urgent operational risks and maintaining service reliability under challenging conditions.
Rubicon System Incident Sunday 15 February	On Sunday, 15 February, at approximately 6:30 PM, the Rubicon System server failed and did not reconnect. As a result, Total Channel Control (TCC) became non-operational, and the system reverted to manual mode. This outage impacted customer water orders and required staff to attend various sites to manually operate channel gates. The system remained offline until 9:20 PM, when normal operation was restored. Several staff members were involved to stabilise and manage the situation during the outage.
Weed Management	Our focus on maintaining service continuity has driven several improvements this season, including expanded contractor support, increased mechanical weed removal, and spraying 250 km of channel, a major increase from 90 km at the same time last year. At the same time, prolonged windy conditions throughout the last quarter significantly limited suitable spraying windows, delaying treatment and allowing weed infestations to impact channel capacity and flow. This required us to temporarily revert parts of the network to manual operation and suspend TCC control to maintain system stability. To stabilise performance, we prioritised clearing the worst-affected areas first and adjusted operating strategies to keep channels moving while waiting for suitable spraying conditions to return, and we are continuing this approach to maintain service levels and improve flow performance.
Decommissioning of Historical MID Assets	Work is continuing the tagging out and decommissioning of historical MID assets, including old walkways and other legacy infrastructure. This process is essential to ensure these structures are safely removed from service and clearly identified as non-operational. The Assets teams are collaborating with Irrigations Services to assess each structure and provide the information required to support future asset planning. This includes determining whether individual assets should be scheduled for replacement, upgrade, or permanent removal as part of a broader asset renewal program. This work will inform the development of a robust budget and structured program for managing historical assets across the district, ensuring safety, compliance, and long-term serviceability.

Aquatic Harvester	As part of our response to ongoing aquatic weed infestations, we engaged an Aquatic Harvester to improve the speed and efficiency of weed removal. This approach proved highly successful and delivered several key benefits, including: • Elimination of chemical use, supporting environmentally sensitive management practices • Faster and more efficient weed removal compared with traditional methods • Minimal to no damage to channel banks, unlike excavator-based removal which can disturb embankments • Improved operational efficiency through continuous harvesting in high-growth periods The use of the Aquatic Harvester has demonstrated strong outcomes and represents a safer, more effective, and more sustainable method for managing aquatic weed infestation.
Continuous Improvement Channel Capacity Trial Improving Customer Supply and Reducing Wait Times	As part of our continuous improvement approach to enhance efficiency and strengthen water-delivery outcomes for our customers, we are trialling increased channel-capacity levels in selected areas. The purpose of this trial is to reduce customer wait times and increase the total volume of water delivered daily. Peter Miller and Alex designed and initiated the trial, beginning with the Nambrok Channel, where capacity was increased by 20 ML Per day from 360ML to 380ML per day. This adjustment enables an additional 140 ML of water per week to be delivered along this section, which has resulted in shorter order wait times and improved service responsiveness. While the trial has shown strong early benefits, it has also highlighted several challenges. The increased flows have resulted in greater wave action, which requires further investigation. Peter and Daniel are currently working with Rubicon to review the cause of the wave behaviour and identify options to manage or rectify these impacts. This trial remains an important step in optimising channel performance and supporting our efficiency targets. Once we are confident in the approach, we will look to expand the trial to additional areas.

Item No: **9.2**

Subject: **Groundwater & Rivers – Operations and Compliance update**

Action: **For noting**

Author: **Russell Tomlin, Manager Groundwater & Rivers Operations and Compliance**

Date: **4/02/2026**

2025/26 Focus Areas
Operations and Compliance
• Address overuse and negative carry over resulting from mid-year and end of year meter reads • Delivery of training opportunities including relating to dams, bores, compliance, enforcement within GWR and across the organisation where appropriate • Provide clear and updated communications in relation to operations and compliance • Continue use of drone technology to support operations, compliance and enforcement activities • Complete investigation within Maribyrnong catchment, and progress investigations within Mornington Peninsula and Hopkins Basin catchments • Working with IT and DEECA to develop automated workflow processes, and GIS mapping relating to operations, compliance and enforcement • Promoting engagement and collaboration with other regulators via Compliance Community of Practice meeting, Water Compliance catchup meetings, Authorised Officer Forum • Identifying opportunities for co-location, joint operations, compliance and enforcement activities with other regulators

Operations and Compliance Update

Issue	Commentary
Moorabool Catchment Investigation	Catchment investigation inspections finalised and enforcement actions including Section 151 Notice of Contravention and Section 78, and 80 Ministerial Directions issued.
Mornington Peninsula Catchment Investigation	Catchment investigation desktop assessments have commenced. Upon completion communications will be sent to dam owners/occupants flagging upcoming dam inspections as per Maribyrnong Catchment investigation process.
Hopkins Basin Catchment Investigation	Catchment investigation desktop assessments have commenced. Upon completion communications will be sent to dam owners/occupants flagging upcoming dam inspections as per Maribyrnong Catchment investigation process.

Maribyrnong Catchment Investigation	Catchment investigation communications sent to dam owners/occupants flagging upcoming dam inspections. Initial inspections ongoing in relation to PHD and waterway determinations. Potential compliance issues identified may result in further inspection, drone surveillance, evidence gathering and potential enforcement actions including Section 151 Notice of Contravention, Section 78 and 80 Ministerial Directions, and potential prosecutions.
Rosters and Restrictions	Work in relation to this slowed due to staff changes and resourcing issues and has not progressed as planned. We have now recruited for a role, and this will be a priority task moving forward. The work on the Roster and Restrictions uplift including: • Review and update of website information • Upgraded Rosters and Restrictions hotline with numbered options relating to relevant rivers and streams • Development of factsheets • Communications plan drafted to support communications with customers around Roster and Restriction requirements, timing with the information mailout to customers. • Mailout to customers will include a letter advising requirements around rosters and restrictions as well as their roster The team are currently working in collaboration with Melbourne Water in relation to automation opportunities and improvements. It is anticipated this approach may shift the strategy and result in further delays.
Annual usage report (inc. overuse)	On 10 June 2025 DEECA communicated to all water corporations that continuous accounting would be applied to all water users for unauthorised take in the Victorian Water Register from 30 June 2025. This means that the Victorian Water Register will now apply continuous accounting measures to all water users (irrespective of whether they hold groundwater or surface water licence, or a general place of take approval). As a result, any 2024-25 unauthorised take volumes for surface water take and use licences will be deducted from the water made available to the holder under their licence in the new year (in most cases on 1 July). From an operational, compliance and enforcement perspective SRW have commenced analysing data gathered collected from meter reading activities and identified matters relating to overuse and negative carry over. A consistent operational, compliance and enforcement response is being applied pertaining to overuse and negative carry over. The enforcement response to address the overuse and related contraventions of the Water Act 1989, has included, but is not limited to, issuing advisory letters, warning letters, and potentially infringement notices.

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Item No: **9.3**

Subject: **Meet The Team – Water Supply East**

Members of the Water Supply East operational team will join the meeting to introduce themselves to the MCCC members.

Renee Wicks, Manager Water Supply East, will provide an overview of the team structure.

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Southern Rural Water

General Business

Final Updates and Round Table

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Item No: **10.1**

Subject: **Recruitment Update**

Matt Cook, Manager Strategic Projects and Service Optimisation, will provide the committee with an update on the recruitment process and the next steps to formalise the process and appointment of new members.

Item No: **10.2**

Subject: **Customer Consultative Committee Handbook**

Rachel Lunn will review the Customer Consultative Committee handbook and answer any questions relating to the document.

Item No: **10.3**

Subject: **Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Framework**

Rachel Lunn will provide an update on the strategic stakeholder engagement framework and how this will be used to support the pricing submission process.

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Item No: **11**

Subject: **General Business**

The Chair will introduce any items of general business and open the round table for discussion.

Item No: **12**

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: **13**

Subject: **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Macalister Customer Consultative Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 26 May 2026 – to be held in person at the SRW Maffra Office.

Item No: **14**

Subject: **Close**

The Chair will close the meeting.

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Supplementary Reading

Southern Rural Water

Our Board

Southern Rural Water's board currently comprises of eight board members including the Managing Director and seven non-executive directors.

The chair and non-executive directors are appointed by the Minister for Water; the Managing Director is appointed by the board.

The full detail of the SRW Board and Executive team can be viewed on our website here.

Joanne Butterworth-Gray

Chair

Joanne is a highly accomplished leader with a 45-year agribusiness and regional leadership legacy. Her extensive farming and water policy knowledge has been pivotal to her role as Chair of the Southern Rural Water board.

Her diverse career, spanning across agriculture, agritourism and executive roles within the Victorian wine industry and Victorian Government, has been instrumental in fostering a shift in agribusiness mindsets and promoting the adoption of innovative technologies and sustainable agribusiness practices in Victorian farming communities.

An entrepreneur by nature, Joanne has contributed to transforming the Gippsland agricultural region and establishing a collaborative sector-based approach to agriculture that encompasses all food and fibre production.

Joanne's hands-on experience as a farm gate agritourism business owner for 14 years has instilled a profound understanding of customer needs and a deep appreciation for collaborative work.

Joanne sees her role at Southern Rural Water as an advocate for the Victorian food and fibre economy and is committed to leading Southern Rural Water as an agile and future-ready business partner for food security and through the regional renewable energy transition.

Her forward-thinking approach and unwavering dedication to agribusiness are evident in the various Chair positions she holds, including with Fairtrade Australia & New Zealand. She is highly strategic and facilitates conversations to ensure everyone can contribute and feels respected and valued.

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Southern Rural Water

Michael Browne
Director

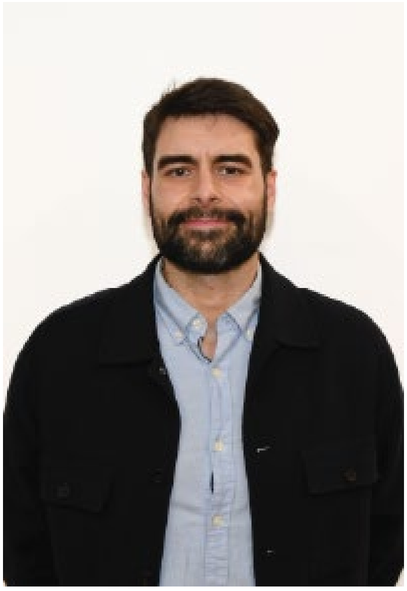
For over two decades, Michael has worked in planning, project management and asset delivery across the water industry. Through his positions at Sydney Water and Yarra Valley Water and roles in integrated water management (IWM) across the Victorian Government, Michael brings expertise in urban water cycle management to the Southern Rural Water board.

A Barkandji-Wamba Wemba man from rural NSW, Michael is currently working closely with Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to help embed IWM policies, improve planning for Country and support effective water allocation conversations.

He recognises Traditional Owner aspirations must be met through collaboration. Through his engagements with water corporations, government agencies and the community, Michael advocates for optimistic collaboration to address challenges and opportunities across Southern Rural Water's service area.

Michael's vision extends to treating water as a valuable community asset, with water corporations, such as Southern Rural Water having a social responsibility to manage this resource. He envisions an industry that places the community and cultural values at the core of decision-making for water management.

Michael is dedicated to fostering open conversations and to deep listening to understand the diverse needs and challenges within communities. He seeks to integrate flexibility into decision-making processes to ensure that these include consideration of future generations and challenges, such as drought, emerging technologies and shifting community expectations.



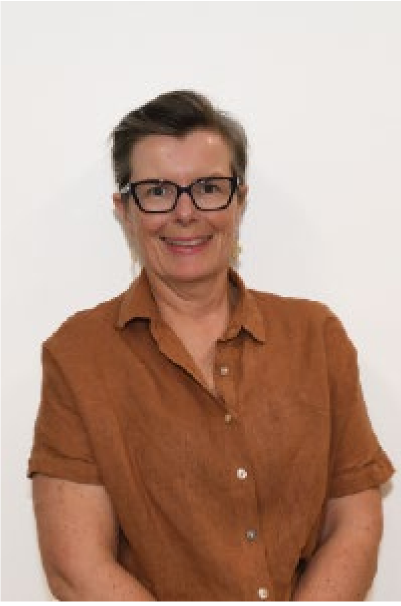
Jackson Chatfield
Independent Aboriginal Board Delegate

Jackson is a proud Gunditjmara-Kirrae Whurrong man born and raised on Country in Warrnambool, South-West Victoria. After moving to Melbourne in 2016 to pursue work and personal opportunities, he returned home to his Country and is now based in Port Fairy.

He has been serving as the Executive Officer for the Birrarung Council since March 2022 where he provides cultural and strategic leadership. The Birrarung Council, established under the Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Act 2017 (the Act), provides advice to the Victorian Government on protecting and improving the Birrarung (Yarra River) and its lands.

Jackson supported DEECA's Water Catchment Group preparations for and responses to the Yoorrook Justice Commission's Land Injustices Inquiry. This experience gave great insights into the State's water reform agenda and a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities to support Aboriginal self-determination and strengthen Traditional Owners' role in Victoria's water sector.

Jackson has served as Statewide Aboriginal Landcare Facilitator with the Victorian Landcare Program at DELWP as well as a Cultural Ambassador for the Victorian Nature Festival.



Catherine Jenkins

Director

Cath Jenkins lives with her family on their beef farm at South Purrumbete in South West Victoria, where they ran a dairy enterprise for over 15 years.

A former Chair of Corangamite Catchment Management Authority and Vic Catchments, Cath is currently a member of the Victorian Agriculture Climate Change Council and a Board member of Western Victoria Primary Health Network.

Passionate about Victorian agriculture and sustainable rural communities, she brings together practical farming experience and strong leadership in regional development and the water sector.

In addition to governance roles, Cath owns and operates, Rural People Co., providing consulting and facilitation services to organisations and agribusinesses across regional Australia.

Brendan Flynn

Director

Brendan brings a wealth of expertise in finance, economics and government policy analysis from the private and public sectors to the Southern Rural Water board.

His experience as Deputy Secretary at the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance and the Department of Premier and Cabinet provides a deep understanding of economic and social policies.

With a strong economic background, Brendan understands the importance of robust financial management and the pivotal role water and agriculture play in the broader Victorian economy.

He recognises the significance of a thriving agricultural sector for Victoria and sees Southern Rural Water as a crucial entity that delivers a vital resource for the environment, economy and communities.

Brendan also understands the importance of local agriculture and the integral role the agricultural sector plays within rural communities. He actively listens to customers to understand the challenges and issues associated with rural water management and places great importance on promoting the value of water and the services Southern Rural Water provides.

Brendan is the newest member of the Southern Rural Water board and is excited to contribute to fulfilling the vision of delivering exceptional value to customers and the community through excellence in rural water management.

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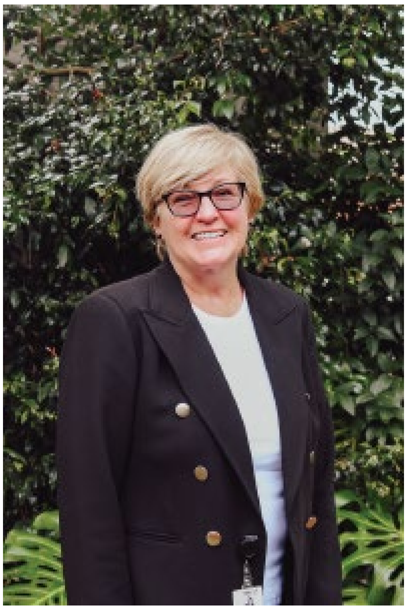


Michelle McCrum

Director and Chair of People, Safety and Culture Committee

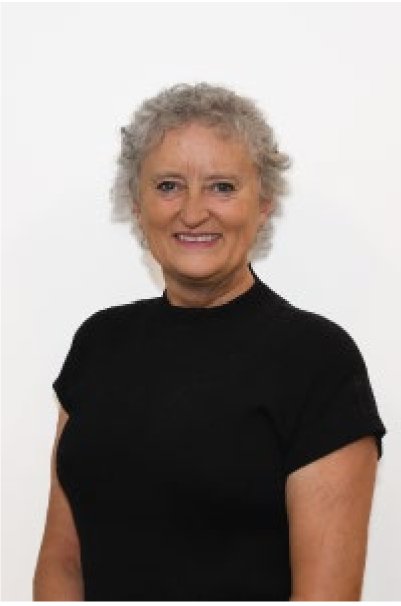
Michelle is the longest-serving member of the current Southern Rural Water board and brings over 25 years of strategic expertise and leadership experience to the organisation.

Married to a fifth-generation farmer and living within the agricultural community, Michelle sees the impacts of climate change and water security firsthand and understands how important water is to farming and the economy.

Michelle prides herself on listening to customers to understand their needs but also helping farmers consider new solutions and exploring how Southern Rural Water can assist them. She considers the full ecosystem in which customers, communities and Southern Rural Water interact.

As Chair of the People, Safety, and Culture Committee, Michelle is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive workplace for staff. Her advocacy for diversity and cultural safety underpins the importance she places on creating an environment where individuals feel heard and valued.

Michelle is excited about Southern Rural Water's future and is empowering the next generation of board members and executives by sharing her knowledge and experience to help them navigate challenges, such as evolving technologies and liabilities.



Claire Miller

Director

Claire is a senior executive with expertise in rural and environmental water policy and management, national water reform, stakeholder and community engagement, communication, and government relations.

As a water policy specialist and a former journalist, she has more than 40 years' experience immersed in complex operating environments on the frontline of resolving issues in water, climate change, agriculture and environment.

On a crowded planet, Claire is passionate about breaking down the false binary of agriculture vs environment and going beyond idealism to find practical solutions to improve river health and keep family farms in production.

Having been involved in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan in various government and industry roles since its inception in 2007, Claire knows intimately the socioeconomic impacts and environmental limits of water reform. She is focused on ensuring that hard lessons learned in the north will pave a smoother pathway to sustainable, affordable water supplies in the south.

Southern Rural Water

Anthony Scarff

Director and Acting Chair of Audit, Risk and Governance Committee

Anthony brings a vibrant curiosity and energy to the Southern Rural Water board and is deeply committed to the economic, agricultural and environmental sustainability the corporation provides for our community.

Having grown up around extensive family farming operations, combined with more than 20 years' experience in a range of public and private businesses, Anthony takes a holistic view of the work required to ensure customers, communities and the environment share the benefits of a strong organisation.

Throughout his finance, operations, and strategy career, Anthony has helps led teams to modernise and create new efficiencies to enable continuous improvement and long-term viability. He applies this sustainable business acumen to his responsibilities at Southern Rural Water, focusing on water efficiencies that can benefit customers, farmers, and the environment.

Appointed to the board in October 2023, Anthony brings a strong sense of community and a commitment to adding new value for customers, particularly as the region transitions to renewable energy options. Currently acting Chair of the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee, and a member of the Asset Governance Committee, Anthony sees his leadership as an important way to support the people at Southern Rural Water to achieve tangible results for the communities they serve. He is excited to see the value everyone brings, as he believes it takes a team to create successful outcomes

Andrew Smith

Director

Andrew is an engaging, influential and passionate agribusiness industry leader with over 35 years in agriculture and commercial banking in executive, director and consulting roles. A trusted advisor to Board Chairs, Directors, CEO's and Executives. Renowned for positive engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

Agribusiness specialist who has operated at executive and general manager level and has worked in locations and industries across regional Australia, and today is the CEO for Farm Trade Australia. Can shift culture and deliver compelling strategies, organisational growth, transformation, corporate governance, customer and employee experience, audit, and risk management.

Andrew is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, a fellow of the Australian Rural Leadership Program and has completed executive leadership training at Columbia Business School and Monash Mt Eliza.

Southern Rural Water

Kylie Steel

Director

Kylie comes from a family with a rich legacy in orchard growing, spanning five generations of apple and cherry farmers in Bacchus Marsh. As a member of a farming family, Kylie has seen business practices modernise and evolve in response to climate change and emerging technology.

Significant environmental events, such as the Millennial Drought and Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria, have helped shape Kylie's career. These events motivated her to pursue further studies in bushfire science and establish SCB Consult, a business dedicated to providing specialist consulting on climate change, bushfire science and emergency management.

Her forward-thinking leadership and passion for making a meaningful difference in the lives of people and the communities she serves is evident in her commitment to sustainability, environmental protection and resilient farming practices.

Risk management is ingrained in Kylie's work, and she sees the benefits of establishing strong relationships with farming communities to prepare for future climate change challenges. She actively seeks to build these connections to further her understanding of stakeholders' evolving needs and help build Southern Rural Water into a future-ready organisation that supports farmers.

Kylie is also a member of the Expert Technical Panel of the Resilient Building Council of Australia and the Bushfire Building Council of Australia and a director of the Barwon Health Foundation.

Scott Cornish

Acting Managing Director

Scott is responsible for developing and delivering SRW's capital plan including critical modernisation projects, with a focus on outstanding asset management and dam safety management.

With 19 years of experience as a Civil Engineer in private consulting for diverse clients, including State Government Authorities, Local Government, and private industry Scott joined SRW Executive Team in July, 2021 bringing with him a wealth of experience as a Civil Engineer and multi-disciplinary senior leader having managed programs across teams in the Middle East, India, South Australia, New South Wales, metropolitan Melbourne, and rural Victoria.

Scott joined SRW, from Western Water, with a personal commitment to the sustainable growth and well-being of local communities.

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MACALISTER CUSTOMER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ROLLING WORK PLAN

	Requirement	2026				Notes
		FEB	MAY	AUG	NOV	
Principal & Business Matters	Communications report	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Board updates	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Water Supply East Update	✓	✓	✓	✓	*Standing item:* update report on current projects and issues *May 2026* – update on salinity and salinity pumps (MC)
	End of season wrap-up			✓		
Policy and Strategic Direction	Committee appointments			✓		Yearly (Chair and Deputy Chair vote)
	Environmental Water Management Flows				✓	
	Climate Outlook and Drought Response Update			✓		
	Corporate Plan	✓			✓	For noting. Full plan provided as discretionary reading
Project Updates (DEECA & SRW)	HARC MID Operational Model Review	✓	✓	✓	✓	Update or discussion at each meeting ongoing (Action item 35442)
Admin & Other Business	Meeting evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Important issues from other customer committees	✓	✓	✓	✓	As required
	Matters referred to the committee by the board/board committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	As required
	Committee Workplan	✓	✓	✓	✓	