

**Date:** Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022

**Time:** 9:10AM – 10:45AM

**Location:** St Anglicans Church Hall, Emerald

**Attendees:**

**Representing customers:** David Hiette, Neek Morawitz, Ross Burnett, Peter Besch, Neil Dale, Robert Ingram, Taylor Pressler

**Council members:** Nathan Litzow (CHRC)

**Sunwater representatives:** Jason Smith (GM Central), Manesh Magan (Customer Engagement Team Lead), Bailey McBeth Cooper (Operations Manager Nogoa Mackenzie), Emily Caleo (Customer Engagement Advisor), Marian Hart (Yield and Planning Manager), Sarah McComber (Project Manager), Keelie O’Sullivan (Stakeholder Relations Advisor), Rachel Rice (GM Commercial Customer & Analysis)

**Guests:** Sarah Lingard (DRDMW), June Reynolds (Phillips Group)

**Apologies:** Madeline Bourke, Jason Hoolihan, Deborah Silver, John McDougall, Scott Stevens, Jason Hall

**Minutes:**

Agenda items		
Item no.	item	Presenter
1	Meeting Open	Manesh Magan
2	Project Update: Preliminary Business Case Update Shortlist	Sarah McComber
3	Project Update: Options Analysis	Keelie O’Sullivan
4	Carryover Options	Marian Hart
5	Customer Forum Update	Manesh Magan
6	Meeting Close	All

## 1. Meeting Open

- Sunwater gave overview of agenda
- Sunwater to take apologies for record
- Sunwater confirmed the location of meeting minutes on the Sunwater website
- Sunwater confirmed that everyone receives links to the minutes post meeting.

## 2. Project Update: Preliminary Business Case Update Shortlist

### 2.1. Shortlist options

Sunwater presented from [slide pack](#)

- Sunwater advised that we are now at the shortlist phase
- Sunwater have until May 2023 to submit to the National Water Grid Fund (NWGF) for funding, in order to proceed with a solution.
- Sunwater advised that the long list was run through IQQM and other options analysis (OA) processes to get to the shortlist options list to see which will best suit the region
- Sunwater advised that after the OA process, options proceed to detailed business case, this is required to satisfy the NWGF to release funding.

### 2.2. Questions and feedback

- The LWSWG queried if more than one project can be put forward for funding?
  - Sunwater advised that, if two options meet all criteria, both options could be put forward.
- Are the projects restoring the yield/reinstating the storage capacity and security of the scheme? Or increasing yield?
  - Sunwater advised that objective of this project was to restore the reliability to the level it was with the IRD installed on Bedford. All current modelling is focused on finding solutions that achieve this reliability. The demand assessment allowed for opportunity to identify new demand. If there is significant additional demand, this may support the selection of some options to progress to the next phase.
- The LWSWG queried if Sunwater considered feedback from the group, when completing the OA and reaching the shortlist.
  - Sunwater confirmed that feedback from the group is included when considering shortlist options.
- Has the Off-stream storage location been identified yet?
  - No location confirmed yet.
- Restoring the reliability to where it was, does that serve demand for current and future purposes?
  - Sunwater confirmed that the objective is about restoring the reliability to its historical performance. However, a demand assessment has been completed as part of the project.
  - Sunwater further advised that the DRDMW is completing a review of the Water Plan. Sunwater has made a submission as part of the preliminary public consultation for the Water Plan review process, including a request to consider the relocation of unallocated strategic reserve to locations of demand within the Basin.
- The LWSWG requested the outcomes of the demand assessment so that they can understand where the demand is and what options on the shortlist make sense for moving forward.
  - Sunwater need to consider the privacy requirements for releasing information collected in the demand assessment and what can be shared.

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- The LWSWG queried if the group are being asked to be involved in selecting the option to take forward to the NWGF. Will it come back to the group as to what the final options end up being and will they be asked for their opinion?
  - Sunwater do need to address all the requirement of the BCDF framework, in order to apply for external funding.
  - Sunwater confirmed what the final four options are at this stage
    - Sunwater to highlight Authority and Member Roles & Responsibilities, as per the Terms of Reference document.
- The LWSWG highlighted that the raising of weir, which will restore reliability to the scheme, would be much more affordable, in comparison to building new infrastructure.
  - Sunwater advised that the OA process requires consideration of all options before moving to the next step, demand location, reliability and cost are all considerations to be addressed in the analysis.
- The group further advised that previously there were farms on the North Side of the weir, these could be reinstated.
  - Sunwater advised that the OA demand studies, and social impact analysis will inform the demand for the 4 options and understand the point being made that demand may be created once additional allocation is available.

### 3. Project Update: Options Analysis

#### 3.1. Demand Assessment status and Social Impact Evaluation with Phillips Group

- Phillips Group confirmed their function; to look at social impacts and public interest. Social impact is about business, work and moral benefits.
- Phillips Group advised that they could schedule Microsoft Teams' meetings in the coming weeks.
- Phillips Group asked if the same reliability would be gained from the other 3 projects (other than Bedford)
  - LWSWG noted that they are being asked to comment on things they don't have enough information on. (e.g., where's the off-stream storage going? what will be the capacity of Bingeang? Why has Comgoa weir been discussed for so long?)
  - Sunwater advised that restoring the storage capacity at Bedford would provide an additional 5000 ML of storage capacity. The Comgoa Weir new infrastructure being considered for this assessment is 10,000 ML. This solution may both restore the reliability lost at Bedford and provide some additional entitlement (though noting at the current time there is no additional entitlement available in the current Water Plan.
- Phillips Group asked if it would be an issue for a different storage to fulfill the requirements that raising Bedford Weir would.
  - The LWSWG advised that, as an irrigator, they don't care where it comes from, as long as the water is available.
  - They further advised that they feel these conversations are highly manipulatable. The reliability comes down to what is available in the "zone".
- Phillips Group asked what does the restoration of the reliability mean to customers?
  - The LWSWG advised that, for the last 5 years, in the dry season, it means everything.
  - The reliability changes the allocation available to the entire scheme, even if by a small percent, it's better than nothing.
  - When talking in Announced Allocations, the missing 5000 ML in the storage, can be equate to a noticeable change. For example, if the missing 5000 ML storage is included into the

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announced allocation calculations, it could mean a 0.5% MP allocation which equates to 9000 ML across the scheme.

- Phillips Groups asked if any of the storages impact business/irrigations practices?
  - Any infrastructure, with increased capacity, would add a layer of reliability
  - The reliability and the volume were bought into by scheme customers and paid for.
  - The LWSWG advised that the Central Highlands Regional Council have data available, on their website, regarding the economic income variances since Bedford storage was lost, plus the effects of the dry season.
  - LWSWG would like to see more quantitative data for the shortlist options.
- Phillips Group advised that they would consult with the group further outside of this meeting.

### 3.2. Other questions and comments

- The LWSWG asked if strategic infrastructure reserve being considered.
  - Sunwater has provided feedback to the DRDMW, which will be considered in the whole of Basin Water Plan review.
- How often is water released out of Bedford Weir for downstream consumption?
  - Sunwater advised that if Bingegang Weir gets low, MOL (minimum operating level) releases are made to Bingegang Weir. This has only occurred twice in the last 5 years.
- The LWSWG queried Bingegang being on the options shortlist. If the scheme keeps Bedford, then water can be released to Bingegang. Even if the demand is there. It makes sense to store water higher up the scheme, so it can be released downstream.
- What will happen to the extra 5000 ML if a 10,000 ML capacity Comgoa Weir is built and if strategic allocation is created?
  - Sale of the entitlement made available by the additional storage of 5000 ML in Comgoa Weir could not happen unless additional strategic infrastructure reserve is made available as part of the current Fitzroy Basin Water Plan review.
- Would there be efficiencies in having the storages upstream where demand is and not incurring losses?
  - Sunwater confirmed that there is an added benefit of “leap frogging” water between weirs so as to reduce losses. If Comgoa was built, releases from Fairbairn Dam may not be required to service demand in Comgoa ponded area, therefore there would be a reduction in scheme transmission losses.
- The LWSWG indicated that it would be significant that the last dry period be important to be in the model.
  - Sunwater advised that there is a similar drought period in the current model. This is the model being used for the current options assessment. A new Water Plan model is being developed as part of the Water Plan review process and once finalised this new model will include the recent dry period.
- What does the timeline look like for when the project could be started or completed?
  - Any options chosen will need to be tested through the new Fitzroy water plan, once we have these results, they will feed into the business cases for the options put forward to the NWGF.
  - Sunwater advised that it will be a number of years before a project is started, as there’s significant steps that need to be taken to get the funding. It would be remiss of Sunwater not to take these steps and fulfill requirements to get funding.

## 4. Carryover options

### 4.1. Nogoa Mackenzie WSS carryover options

- Sunwater advised that carryover is a Sunwater product, the rules are set by Sunwater and then approved by the regulator (DRDMW).
- Sunwater presented from [slide pack](#) and talked through carryover options and consequences for water available.

### 4.2. Questions and feedback

- The LWSWG asked for clarification on the driver for considering changes to the carryover calculation. Is it to improve the reliability for HP users?
  - Sunwater advised that the changes to carryover were a request of the LWSWG. The intent is to reduce the impact of the sudden change in AA if the storage is close to 193 m and 197 m AHD at the start of the water year. This impacts both HP and MP water users.
- Sunwater advised that no changes to the carryover calculation are required. Is an option to change the calculation is chosen by the group, that option will need to go to the broader customer group and then be approved by the regulator before it can be implemented.
- Sunwater will give the information to the group in January prior to the next LWSWG meeting for a decision at that meeting how to proceed.
- The LWSWG noted that if changes to any calculations make changes to pricing, we need that information as well.
  - Sunwater advised that finance advice was that it wouldn't change pricing.
- The LWSWG asked if changing the rules to increase carryover allocations, will this reduce the medium priority, or can the rules be changed to increase the allocations for the next water year?
  - Sunwater confirmed that no records have been located regarding how the original limits on carryover were determined.
  - The sliding scale option would be a Sunwater carryover product rule. Other changes would need to be made via an assessment under the new Water Plan.
  - Sunwater provided a discussion of the bucket diagram – indicating the order of inclusion in any AA calculation. There is a limit to the available useable volume at any given time and that volume needs to be shared between carryover and AA.

## 5. Customer forum update

- Sunwater to circulate the action items with comments about what has been completed and incomplete (customer forum update) (Manesh to complete and circulate)

## 6. General Business

- There is a problem with salt in the river above the duck ponds. Are Sunwater able to assist with this? Possibly install an EC gauge?
- Sunwater to present the mechanism employed for reaching the options shortlist. Sunwater to present the MCA.

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## 7. Approval and Review

<b>Chair:</b>	Manesh Magan (Customer Engagement Team Lead)
<b>Minutes:</b>	Emily Caleo (Customer Engagement Advisor)
<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2022

## 8. Action items

Agenda item	Action	Responsible Person/s
2. / 6.	Sunwater to present the mechanism employed for reaching the options shortlist. Sunwater to present the MCA.	Sarah McComber
3.	Phillips group to conduct one on ones with the LWSWG to better understand social impacts.	Keelie O'Sullivan
3.	Sunwater to share more quantitative data which supports the options considered.	Sarah McComber
4.	Sunwater to share carryover options with the LWSWG and for a conclusion to be reached at the next meeting, prior to going to customer consultation with the WSS.	Marian Hart/Emily Caleo
4.	Sunwater to share the "Bucket" to explain carryover.	Marian Hart
2.	Sunwater to highlight Authority and Member Roles & Responsibilities, as per the Terms of Reference document.	Emily Caleo
5.	Sunwater to update the customer forum action items table, with comments, and circulate to the group	Manesh Magan