

Boyne River Irrigators Shed Meeting

15 December 2016

A Shed Meeting for SunWaters customers on the Boyne River was held in Mundubbera on Thursday 15 December 2016. Attendees included:

John Kelly, SunWater	Tim Allan	Mark Postle
Bevan Steger, SunWater	Megan Allan	Robin Dale
Andrew Maughan, SunWater	Boyd Paton	Graham Lohse
Ken Darrow	Mitch Blokland	Scott Willson
Brad Ward	Blade McKenzie	Troy Emmerton
Michelle Chicken		

The purpose of the meeting was to advise customers of the scheme operating rules in the Burnett Basin Resource Operations Plan (ROP) and more specifically the cessation of releases from Boondooma dam to the Boyne River under the 70,000ML cut-off rule.

SunWater advised customers that SunWater anticipate the 70,000ML cut-off of releases from Boondooma dam to the Boyne river to occur in the first week of March as per SunWaters storage model which can be accessed by customers on SunWaters website. SunWater advised customers that this was also the trigger for the critical water supply arrangements under the Burnett Basin ROP which allows customers to continue to take water from waterholes (until the waterhole is 0.5m below the cease to flow level) and bed sands. SunWater advised customers that the only approval they require for accessing bed sand water is a riverine protection permit and they should contact DNR in Bundaberg to arrange. SunWater further advised customers that SunWater had spoken to Bruce Bass in DNR Bundaberg and he advised DNR can turn these permits around pretty quickly.

It was raised by customers why Tarong have not been taking water from Wivenhoe so that Boondooma would not be down to the 70,000ML cut-off. SunWater advised that the Wivenhoe pipeline is not operational and hasn't been since it was damaged in the 2011 floods however SunWater understands that Tarong are looking at getting the pipeline operational again.

Generally, customers were not happy about the 70,000 ML cut off and want it changed. Customers spoke about forming a working group to lobby government for change. SunWater queried whether the customers had made submissions during the development of the ROP and SunWater was advised that customers had made submissions, but their submissions were largely ignored. Other queries raised by the general customer group, that SunWater is to seek clarification and report back on were:

1. Can customers get a reduction in their water prices from SunWater once the cutoff is implemented?
2. Will customers be required to pay SunWater charges if they are having to access their allocation from bed sand water?
3. When is the ROP due to be reviewed?

Customers discussed the inefficient transmission in the river and high losses which could be reduced if there was a weir or series of micro weirs on the river. Discussion was had around the simple construction methodology that would be required and if it was something customers could undertake themselves. SunWater advised customers of the likely significant costs of such works and extensive approvals required.

Customers discussed access to the bed sand water and it was understood that possibly moving up to 400 cubic metres was a self assessable activity and no permit was required. SunWater advised customers that SunWater would invite a representative from DNR to the next meeting to advise what can and can't be done in relation to accessing water in the bed sands and other works in the Boyne river (micro weirs to create pumping pools).

SunWater gave an undertaking to customers that SunWater would provide them with advice each fortnight on the storage of the dam and likely cut-off as we move forward. SunWater are also to advise customers on how to access the Boondooma Dam Forecast Storage Model on SunWaters website.

Next meeting: Wednesday 18 January 2017 at 2pm in Mundubbera.