

LOWER MARY IRRIGATOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE



MINUTES OF MEETING – 8 February 2017

Meeting opened by Allen Birt at 9:15am at the Maryborough Canegrowers.

Present

Attendees	Representation
Allen Birt	Irrigator Advisory Committee Tinana
Chris Nitschinsk	Irrigator Advisory Committee Copenhagen
Andrew Adams	Observer (MSF)
Tony Coutts-Smith	Proxy for Trevor Crook (MSF)
Cameron Waterson	Observer (Canegrowers Maryborough)
Ross Stevens	Walker Pt irrigator
Milton Pukallus	SunWater – Service Manager Bundaberg
Darren Large	SunWater – Operations Manager
Roy Goldenstein	SunWater – Senior Operator Maryborough

Apologies

Trevor Crook
Norm Muller
Des Morris

Previous minutes

The minutes of the 21 June 2016 meeting were reviewed with the only matter arising being the vacant representative role for the Mary River section. The committee members have suggested Brad Cronau as a potential nominee and Allen offered to contact him and discuss the position. No other issues were raised and the minutes were accepted.

Moved Chris Nitschinsk, Seconded Allen Birt.

Agenda

1. Water Use Historic Review
2. Tinana Transfer, Teddington Transfer
3. Storage Positions
4. Temp Transfer process
5. SunWater Online
6. Bidwill Storage works and Update
7. 2016 Network Service Plan Final result
8. Annual Maintenance Shutdown timing 2017
9. General Business

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1. Water use historic review

The topic of the high demand, particularly on Walker Point, was discussed. The dry, hot conditions at present are driving irrigation demand to some of the highest levels experienced for some time. Irrigation rates were exceeding the capacity of Walker Point pump station at times with some outages occurring over December/January and some customers having to cease irrigating for short periods.

A meeting between SunWater, Des Morris (IAC member) and MSF representatives was held on Thursday 2 February to discuss flow rates and system capacity. From this meeting it was proposed that a shed meeting with all irrigators on the Walker Point system should be held and put to the IAC for endorsement. At present, an informal coordinating system is being adopted to manage access to water during this peak demand period. The IAC endorsed this approach and agreed that a shed meeting was necessary to clarify flow rates, system capacity and detail how an informal coordinating system should work. The meeting would be facilitated by Des Morris and Norm Muller with attendance by Roy Goldenstein and some additional SunWater staff. Most irrigators, including MSF, have been communicating well with Roy and cooperating when requested to alter pumping.

Several questions were raised about whether installing a third pump, and other channel options, at Walker Point could alleviate the peak demand issues. It was agreed that further work would be needed to analyse the benefit and implication of these aspects for the whole scheme. Before any investigation process is planned it was suggested that a workshop be conducted to broadly detail the scope of the investigation and understand the costs involved.

Darren presented a summary of pump station operations over the past 3 years to give an overview of the pumping pattern. The general trend for Walker Point and Copenhagen schemes is that irrigation demand has increased each year since 2014. This year the demand pattern is the highest for the period reviewed. The consensus of the IAC is that this could be repeated each season whilst similar conditions, such as weather and cane prices, continue.

2. Tinana and Teddington transfers

This season has also seen the highest volume of transfers for both Teddington Weir and Tinana creek for some time. The year to date transfer volumes were;

- Tinana Creek – 4,960ML
- Teddington Weir – 1,560ML

It is anticipated transfers may be continued in the short term, however the frequency of transfers will change to manage the storage levels in both Tinana and Mary Barrages.

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3. Storage Position and combined items 4 & 5

The priority for the scheme at present is the impending medium priority cut-off when Mary Barrage reaches 1.00m. The level at the time of the meeting was 2.14m and dropping up to 0.1m per day. This rate of decline will slow now that transfers across to Tinana have reduced. A conservative estimate to reach the cut-off level is 18 days. An SMS message is ready to be sent advising of this timeframe and further information will be provided in a newsletter. Darren advised that customers who do not have a mobile number or email address registered will be called directly to ensure they are aware of the cut-off. The committee discussed and agreed that the initial advice should provide some leeway on the cut-off date and further advice provided regularly to update customers. The updates will be provided Mondays and Fridays and cover storage level, anticipated cut-off date and other relevant changes.

The draft newsletter containing information on the cut-off, storage data, temporary transfer process, and SunWater OnLine details was circulated. There was a suggestion to remove the temporary transfer section but otherwise was accepted. Milton will arrange for the initial message to be sent today and the newsletter to be reviewed before being sent. Cameron offered for the newsletter to be attached to a Canegrowers mailout which is ready to deliver now. Milton and Cameron to discuss after the meeting.

As at 08/02/2017	Storage Level	Storage ML	%
Mary Barrage	2.18m	9,960	83
Tinana Barrage	0.98m	3,230	68

6. Bidwill storage works and update

Darren presented an overview of the Bidwill storage project works providing current status of the project which included a review of the design for drainage works, the constructions process, progress and measured results. A review of the standpipe readings across three months provided a new data series to access the stability of the embankment, the updated Factor of Safety shows 1.5 which allowed the trial rising of the storage by 0.5meters. Monitoring will continue to capture another series of data, then stability reassessed to determine if the original FSL level of EL23m can be restored.

7. 2016 Network Service Plan Final result

Milton and Darren presented the final 2016 Network Service Plan reports for the Lower Mary Bulk Scheme and the Lower Mary Distribution Scheme respectively. Copies of this document are to be sent out to IAC members as requested. Further queries may be sort and welcomed after review of the NSP's by members.

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8. Annual Maintenance Shutdown timing 2017

Darren facilitated a discussion on the timing for the upcoming annual maintenance shutdown planned for this year. It was noted that the timing of the previous shutdown in May 2016 was not ideal as there is potential for irrigation demand during these period. A decision was made to consult back to SunWater maintenance planning staff and present some alternate dates for consideration, possibly in July 2017.

9. General Business

The timing of the Walker Point shed meeting was raised. There is some urgency to hold the meeting as soon as practical but this will need to wait until Des Morris is available. Potential soonest date is next week. Darren and Roy to determine a time in conjunction with Des and the irrigators.

Next Meeting

The date for the next meeting was discussed. The 2018 Network Service Plans are due for presentation around May however Allen is unavailable that month. It was decided to leave the date open for now and confirm in March/April.

Meeting Closed 10:45am

Allen Birt

Darren Large

Milton Pukallus

Chairperson

Service Manager (IS)

Service Manager (BW)

20-2-17

20-2-17

Date

Date

Date