

Mareeba Dimbulah Irrigation Area Council

MINUTES OF MEETING – 20 June 2016

Meeting opened at 10.21am

Present:

Attendees	Representation
Joe Moro	Mareeba Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association
Bronwyn Dwyer	Secretary
Evan McGrath	
Eva Arena	Barron River/Tinaroo Falls Dam Area (left: 11.53am)
Peter Cocuzza	Sunwater Service Manager Mareeba (Acting)
Kylie Collins	Channels/ Pipelines – Western Area (Arrived: 10.25am)
Remo Terranova	Mitchell Catchment Supplemented Streams
Maryann Salvetti	Tableland CANEGROWERS Ltd (Arrived: 10.44am)
Peter Siemsen	DNR Leader Water Resource Management (left: 11.06am)
Peter Howe	Channels/Pipelines – Eastern Area (Arrived: 10.26am)
Petrina Douglas	SunWater (arrived: 10.52am)

1. **Apologies:** Shaun Fassio, James Mummery

2. Previous Minutes & Action List:

- Minutes of the 14th April 16 Meeting were *Moved: Eva Arena, Seconded: Peter Howe as a true and correct record. Carried*

- Action List: Tabled

3. Correspondence:

- Correspondence Log Tabled
- Tabled Letter from Mareeba Shire Council to NRM Minister on Release Rules
- Tabled Letter from NRM Minister to MDIACouncil on Release Rules
- Tableland DEWS Statement regarding the price path whilst Local Management is being worked through. For the next 2 years' water prices will be increased by CPI of 2.5% only for zones already above cost recovery and \$2 + CPI of 2.5% for zones below cost recovery

4. DNRM:

- Barron WRP / ROP
- Environmental Flow Release Rules – Current rules could only be changed through a formal process of opening up the ROP /WRP for review. The review would have to include modelling as you can't just reduce flows without knowing the consequences for all users
- Did have a meeting lined up with the DNRM Minister but it was very short notice and TCL were unable to attend. Will still look to meet with him down the track
- KC: this is a serious issue that needs to be addressed now and livelihoods are at stake – the process you have outlined takes too long. PS: Process is in place to make sure other stakeholders (Stanwell, tourism industry, environment) are not disadvantaged either –PS: current release rules are working as it intended. KC: are other stakeholders paying 100% of the allocation charge in a year when we won't have 100% of the water? PS: the charge you talk about is for delivery through the distribution system. EMc: Changes can be made if your dept. takes it on Board and makes it happen. Tourism etc. doesn't function on an allocation and they don't pay for the water, so irrigators should have priority. EMc: The Minister makes his decision from what staff tells him... the dept. should have taken our issues forward. JM: Minister couldn't make a decision – it is legislation and Act and needs to go through due process. EMc: I understand there is process that has to be gone through but I would like the dept. to be taking our point of view to the Senior staff within the dept. JM: The Minister's office has said that he is aware and is open to further discussion.
- Need to start the process for future years – but it won't help us for this year as the process is too long for this season.

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Action: Joe and Bronwyn to talk to Ministers office and DNRM Staff re opening the ROP/WRP for review on the release rules

- Flow Release Letter Reply from NRM– PS: Currently still in the medium zone for releases. About a month ago, of the 385ML/day required for release 2/3 was being released from dam and 1/3 was made up from natural flow. Releases are reviewed at 1st day of every month and goes for the whole month – looked at Act and there was no way of changing without going through the whole process. It was raised that reducing flow during the month would cause issue for Barron irrigators – it is only an issue when it fluctuates so a downward release is ok.
- Irrigators not happy with using the gauging station at Myola – PS: Myola is used so that if there are inflows between the dam and Myola they are counted and less water is then required to be released from the dam.
- How come with a farm dam what flows in must be released, yet it is not the same for Tinaroo?
- Would be good to know what the flows are going into Tinaroo Falls dam at the moment compared to what is going out

Action: PS to find out the in and outflows from Tinaroo email to Bronwyn for the Committee

5. SunWater:

- Announced Allocation / Carryover – no carryover as dam under 75%. AA letter sent out. Depending on weather AA it is looking like it will be around 65%. Already temporary transfers happening for next water year
- South Walsh Main Channel – Channel from just behind Mutchilba has silted and weeded up and has washes that are losing clay. 120ML is about all we could get through that section. Was getting waterlogging along the road and there was a worry that it was going to give way. De-silted the section with excavators. Proposal to put in R&E project to redo about 1km of channel for about \$80,000
- SunWater online training – Training tomorrow. 33 people booked in. We are still doing a lot of guess work on releases and it causes losses or water not delivered
- Temporary Transfer East Barron – East Barron fully allocated so currently only internal TT is allowed. SunWater and JM had discussion and came up with plan that in years when the AA is under 100% the difference could be TT in from outside of East Barron e.g. If AA is 65% AA and extra 35% allocation from outside of the area could be transferred in. SunWater are happy with that to happen from about February or March of a water year. Could also keep a spreadsheet where if TT goes out of East Barron, irrigators could transfer that amount back in from outside the area. As long as there is notification so everyone gets a go at the water. *The MDIACouncil Committee in agreement with both the proposals for extra allocation to come in when AA is less than 100% and when water is transferred out water can be transferred back in.*

Action: SunWater to put information on East Barron TT in the next Newsletter

- EMc: Delight to hear that SunWater are working with this Committee and is listening to our concerns
- Cutoff of Meter Reading for current water year– 12 noon Friday 1st July
- Cutoff for TT for current water year – 5 days before 30th June
- EMc: My son rang SunWater and got message bank – then rang the emergency number and got no answer. Irrigators are busy and can't wait in the office all day for a call to be returned. PD: Our call centre only has 6 staff. They have timeframes in which they need to return calls and the emergency line should be answered.

6. Local Management Update:

- Positions are currently being reviewed by Ministers / Premiers Office
- Chair ratified but not made official
- Board Members not ratified as yet
- \$8.9 million in the budget
- Looks like end of July before announcements made

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7. Service Target Reviews: Next meeting

8. Central Area Zone Position: TCL and MDFVGA reps happy to appoint Gerard Kath
Action: Bronwyn to talk to Gerard and get his contact details

9. Water register – Going well. Currently about 600 ML available for TT for this water year (\$60-\$70/ML). Also a list wanting TT water for next water year.

Action: Put something out after 1 July to MDFVGA and TCL Members re water register

10. Other Business:

- Water officer didn't return call to one of the irrigators (not sure if it was to the 131 589 number). JM happened to see water officer and asked him to call the irrigator back

10. Next Meeting Date & Agenda Items: TBC at 10am

Meeting closed: 12.13pm

ACTION LIST

Agenda No.	Action	Who	By When	Status
17Apr15 2.7	Put Termination Fees on agenda for next price Path	Bronwyn	Next price path	
27Nov15 3.1.3	Organise a Barron River Users Meeting for early 2016	Joe / Jim	ASAP	
22Apr16 5.1	Get legal Advice of whether minimum meter charge can be applied for meter tampering even if there is no proof	Charlie	May-16	
20Jun16 4.1	Talk to Ministers Office and DNRM re opening WRP/ROP for review on Release Rules	Joe / Bronwyn	ASAP	
20Jun16 4.2	Find out Tinaroo Falls Dam Inflow and outflow figures and e-mail Bronny for Committee	Peter Siemsen	1.7.16	
20Jun16 5.4	Put information on East Barron Temporary Transfer in Next Newsletter	Peter Cocuzza	ASAP	
20Jun16 8.1	Talk to Gerard Kath re his Position and get contact details	Bronwyn	24.6.16	
20Jun16 9.1	Put Water Register Update out to Members	Joe / Bronwyn	ASAP	