

Mareeba Dimbulah Irrigation Area Council

MINUTES OF MEETING – 14 April 2016

Meeting opened at 9.11am

Present:

Attendees	Representation
Joe Moro	Mareeba Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association
Bronwyn Dwyer	Secretary
Evan McGrath	
Eva Arena	Barron River/Tinaroo Falls Dam Area
Charlie Martens	Sunwater Service Manager Mareeba
Jim Mummery	Sunwater Area Operations Manager Far North
Shaun Fassio	NQ Co-op
Remo Terranova	Mitchell Catchment Supplemented Streams
Maryann Salvetti	Tableland CANEGROWERS Ltd
Peter Siemsen	DNR Leader Water Resource Management
Peter Howe	Channels/Pipelines – Eastern Area
Makse Srhoj	Barron River Catchment Supplemented Streams

1. Apologies: Karen Muccignat

- The Committee is saddened by the tragic death of Brad Maisel. Brad was a valued member of this Committee and we will always remember him.

2. Previous Minutes & Action List:

- Minutes of the 27th November 15 Meeting were *Moved: Eva Arena, Seconded: Evan McGrath as a true and correct record. Carried*

- Action List: Tabled

- Joe and Charlie to Organise Meeting with Barron River Customers
- Resend SunWater Barron ROP release submission around to Committee
- Send a letter to DNRM supporting the previous SunWater submission

Action: Jim to re-email Barron ROP release submission to Bronwyn

Action: Bronwyn to forward Barron ROP release submission to Committee

Action: Joe and Bronwyn to prepare submission to DNRM supporting the previous SunWater submission

3. Correspondence:

- NIL

4. DNRM:

- Emerald Creek:

- Unsupplemented Licence Conversions – ha based licences converted to volumetric licenses based on 1ha to 6.6ML in 2013. Volume: 1,422ML. Peter Howe questioned that figure. Peter will check and e-mail Bronwyn.

Action: Peter to check and e-mail East Barron volume figure to Bronwyn

- There is also a daily limit. DNRM encourage unsupplemented irrigators to negotiate between themselves to self roster. There is also seasonal trading available as well.
- Makse commented that the unsupplemented irrigators should be conversing with SunWater so that SunWater water officers know how much water is being used so they can better manage releases.
- Have any extra licences been granted? – no new water licences granted
- At one stage SunWater were only a couple of days away from ringing up the irrigators and telling them that they were going to be unable to deliver them water

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General:

- What are the current environmental releases from Tinaroo? 30ML/day passing Mareeba and 180ML/day passing Myola
- What will the environmental releases be if Tinaroo Dam is at 50% for the 16/17 Water Year? On 1 July under 50% (low) would be 50ML/day, over 50% (medium) will be 385ML/day Myola
- With the dam at such a low level it is ridiculous that 385ML/day could be released for May and June and potentially into the new water year.
- Write to Minister requesting emergency meeting to have the environmental flow releases reduced to 50ML/day

Action: Joe and Bronwyn to write to DNRM Minister and request meeting and cc to and local members

- Notification of potential water restrictions – SunWater to send a letter to irrigators to let them know that it is extremely unlikely there will be carryover and that the announced allocation will be reduced. Provide the link to the website which models the announced allocation.
- Industry groups are also providing their members with information on the potential water restrictions.

5. SunWater:

- Meter Tampering and penalties / costs – over last 6 months there has been increased incidents of meter tampering and customers exceeding their allocations. Also increased number of customers saying their meters aren't working.
- If it is proven that an irrigator has tampered with a meter they will be charged for the repairs. Usage will be worked out and they will be charged for it accordingly. If SunWater unable to prove that the Customer tampered with, the tampering the customer is sent a letter that lets them know what it costs to repair and that the costs is borne by all irrigators. Need to seek legal advice on whether a bill for the special meter reading minimum charge can be imposed even if there is no proof as to who tampered with the meter.

Action: Charlie to get legal advice on whether a bill for the special meter reading minimum charge can be imposed even if there is no proof

- Unauthorised Water Use Policy – If theft of water is detected QLD Police can be notified. SunWater hasn't done this yet. *The MDIACouncil support SunWater protecting customers water entitlements as per the Unauthorised water use policy as other customers water rights shouldn't be impeded upon.*
- Do Not Take Directions – When these are enforced they should not be taking water. There is a lag time between when Brisbane send out letters and when local officers go out and put the tag on. They then go out and check to make sure it hasn't been used. If water has been used the wheel is chained up.
- Meter Inspections and Checking Fees – SunWater hasn't been charging people when they go out and check meters and there is nothing wrong. *The MDIACouncil endorses the charging of the meter checking fee and if the meter is broken it is to be reimbursed.*
- SunWater Online Water Ordering (Changeover from Streamline) – *Moved: Eva Arena, Seconded: Remo Terranova to change over from Streamline to SunWater online. Carried.* (Noted that Makse Srhoj was opposed)
- Need to organise training sessions for SunWater online. The industry groups will need to encourage their members to attend training.

Action: Charlie to organise for SunWater online training sessions

- Easement Conditions (Responsibilities for landholders) – SunWater are meant to have clear access and would have to remove cane, trees etc. that have been planted over pipelines, if required to do repairs. Also if there is damage to the pipeline by the landholder they will be liable.

Action: Charlie to remind customers in next newsletter of the Easement Conditions

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- Power Tariff Review – recommendation leave the re-lift pump tariffs on the same tariffs as last year. Changing the tariffs last year to T62 saved \$50,000 on the cost of the previous year.
- NSP 2016/17 – Bulk: Insurance costs pushed the operations over the QCA target. Operations below when you take insurance out. Preventative and corrective slightly over due to contractors slightly over, labour under so should come in on target. Non routine spend over as post tensioning testing of cables, overhaul gearbox, refurbish vertical lift gate and seal, meter replacement.

Action: Jim to send Bronwyn list of other non-routine projects

- Distribution: 5% over exc. Electricity and insurance on operations. 6% over on routine operations. Power averages \$78/ML on relift pumps. Preventative maintenance 27% above due to weed control and pump inspections. Corrective maintenance under QCA target, non routine \$400,000 under QCA target, old bridges near Tinaroo, concrete lining, east barron air problems and overflows – do work to get rid of air and putting an overflow, paint siphon, other minor projects.
- Copper Sulphate Permit Application Update – Still on research permit. Put in application to APMVA. Expecting answer sometime between Aug – Dec. Got until March next year under research permit.

6. Local Management Update:

- Chair process selected but not approved by Minister.
- Process is then for Chair and selection panel to appoint Board

7. Service Target Reviews: Next meeting

8. Other Business:

- Evan reported his frustration that SunWater is not following up on issues in a timely manner yet they expect irrigators to do things within timeframes – this is not acceptable. Also the letter SunWater sends out when people haven't paid their water bills is too heavily worded.

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

Meeting closed: 12.12pm

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ACTION LIST – 22nd April 2016

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 / Charlie	ASAP	
22Apr16 2.1.1	Re-email previous Barron Release Rules Submission sent to DNRM	Jim	22.4.16	Done
22Apr16 2.1.2	Forward Barron Release Rules Submission to Committee	Bronwyn	22.4.16	Done
22Apr16 2.1.3	Prepare Submission to DNRM supporting previous SunWater Submission	Joe / Bronwyn	6.5.16	
22Apr16 4.1.1	Check East Barron volume figure and e-mail to Bronwyn	Peter Siemsen	22.4.16	Done
22Apr16 4.2	Write to DMRN Minister requesting meeting on Env. Flow Releases	Joe / Bronwyn	22.4.16	Done
22Apr16 5.1	Get legal Advice of whether minimum meter charge cane be applied for meter tampering even if there is no proof	Charlie	May-16	
22Apr16 5.5	Organise SunWater online training sessions	Charlie	May-16	
22Apr16 5.6	Reminder customers of easement conditions in next newsletter	Charlie		
22Apr16 5.8	E-mail Bronwyn list of non-routine projects	Jim	22.4.16	Done