

Mareeba Dimbulah Irrigation Area Council

MINUTES OF MEETING – 17 October 2014

Meeting opened at 10.20am

Present:

Attendees	Representation
Joe Moro	Mareeba Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association
Bronwyn Dwyer	Secretary
Brad Maisel	Channels/Pipelines – Central Area
Shaun Fassio	NQ Co-op
Maryann Salvetti	Channels/Pipelines – Eastern Area (arrived: 10.44am – left 11.48am)
Peter Howe	Channels/Pipelines – Eastern Area (left: 11.48am)
Eva Arena	Barron River/Tinaroo Falls Dam Area
Evan McGrath	
Charlie Martens	Sunwater Service Manager Mareeba

1. Apologies:

Karen Muccignat	Relift Area
Kylie Collins	Channels/ Pipelines – Western Area
Jim Mummery	Sunwater Area Operations Manager Far North

2. Previous Minutes & Action List:

- Minutes of the 29th April 14 Meeting were *Moved: Peter Howe, Seconded: Brad Maisel as a true and correct record. Carried.*

- Action List: Tabled

- Split of Water Entitlements in deceased estates – tabled response

- Length of time taken to transfer Water License Holders – tabled response

- Look into land tenure & talk to landholders re locking the mud road at Arriga – tenure us SunWater land. Charlie hasn't got the group together yet as everyone wants gate in different place. If a landholder wants permanent access they would require a license

Action: Charlie to get land owners together to work out where to close gate

- Brad thinks they used to pay a lease over that road, Charlie couldn't find a record

Action: Brad to see if he can find record of his lease

- Look at more than one mobile number per account on Text messaging – unplanned messaging defaults to the SMS contacts in the database (which could be multiple mobiles). If no mobile number in account they e-mail and ring the customer. Planned message is sent to the preferred type of contact (could be mail or sms or phone). Therefore if you want a message to go to more than one mobile per account the preferred contact must be text messaging.

- Provide breakdown of NSP operational costs – carry over to next meeting

Action: Jim to provide breakdown of bulk operational costs at next meeting

- Termination Fees for Amalgamated water – Need to invite SunWater up to discuss this issue

Action: Joe to invite SunWater up to discuss termination fees with Committee

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3. Correspondence:

- Correspondence Log. *Nothing submitted*

- Karen sent e-mail on re-lift: Tabled

- Relift pump stations across SunWater have had a tariff review and in this scheme they have been changed to tariff 62. This saves \$45,000 but won't be passed through to irrigators because power costs are above QCA prices

Action: Joe/ Bronwyn to write to SunWater to look into whether time of use metering could be installed and offer two rates to irrigators (day and night rate) so that if irrigators water at night they get charged a lower rate. Maybe too many irrigators to all water at night.

Action: Joe/Bronwyn to write to SunWater to work with re-lift Irrigators on current and re future demand electricity tariffs

- Minister confirmed to Karen that there is an inter-departmental electricity rate. We need to clarify what this is

Action: Joe/Bronwyn to write to Minister re inter-departmental electricity rate

4. Local Management Update:

- Nothing back from Government on our Local Management Business case and no timeframes provided on when a decision will be made by Government

- Eaton Scheme are privatising and they have been told by SunWater that the contracts with customers won't be deemed. They also said that they will not deem them if Local Management goes ahead.

5. SunWater Report:

- Shutdowns: A lot of small shutdowns - 1 or 2 days at a time. Scour valve replacements, pipe leaks. No big ones on the horizon

- Announced Allocation and Carry Over: 100%. Dam is at 77% so will likely be at 75% and carryover cease in a couple of weeks.

- A letter / text will come out from SunWater asking people to read meters when carryover ceases

- Water Ordering: Officers getting tougher on water ordering.

- Weed Screens: Require feedback on proposal re weed screens. If screening an offtake that services several customers SunWater will install and maintain. If it is on a single irrigator offtake they pay for and maintain a screen (preferably made to SunWater specification but can be modified) and sign an indemnity and provide insurance.

- The *MDIACouncil are happy with this proposal*

- Nardello's Bird Watching Area: TRC proposing to have designated bird watching area.

- SunWater is opposing the proposal.

- The MDIACouncil opposes the bird watching area proposal as Nardello's Lagoon is irrigation storage

Action: Charlie to provide Bronwyn with correspondence from TRC re Bird Watching

Action: Joe/Bronwyn to write to TRC saying we oppose the Nardello's Lagoon bird watching proposal

- Shed Meeting: Atherton Creek Area – talked about extra farms coming on line and need to work together or there could be rostering required. Talked about shut downs.

- SunWater will put a scheme map on the website so irrigators can check the names of the scheme areas to determine whether a shutdown is going to affect them

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- Barron River Releases: No notification of last change of flow. Jim has assured that he will notify Barron River Customers in future.
- Would be better to have flows for irrigation at this time of year. Need to put in submission about release rules

Action: MDIACouncil to put in submission on release rules for WRP / ROP review

- Rural Residential Sub divisions: SunWater don't like to supply to rural residential sub divisions as it turns irrigation scheme into domestic users.
- Ray Road and Mines Road: SunWater were forced to give some of the blocks water, MSC is customer to Sun Water and MSC then supplies water to some blocks. New subdivision in that area is asking for SunWater to supply water. Options are: give an offtake to one customer (e.g. body corp or MSC) who could then supply water or say no and make them go to MSC and get town water taken out there.
- Charlie is going to talk to MSC to gauge their opinion
- The MDIACouncil position is that SunWater should push back and say no and tell the landowner of the subdivision to find alternate water source.
- Where do we draw the line in the future – The MDIACouncil position is that SunWater should be saying no to supplying water to subdivisions and that no costs associated with subdivisions should be borne by irrigators
- Any future projects it should be a developer requirement to fence channels if developments are going past channels

Action: Charlie to send TRC and MSC letters re fencing requirements for subdivisions if they border irrigation channel

- Water License & Entitlement Issues: NIL

6. Barron WRP / ROP Review Update:

- Draft is with Minister. Should be released for review in December
- Major changes are in the groundwater areas in Atherton
- MDIACouncil will be given a brief by DNRM once the draft is released and there will also be a series of public meetings

7. Cairns Regional Council / Advance Cairns Future Water Requirement:

- Cairns looking at future water options. Need 30,000ML for future growth over next 30 years but this would come forward if Aquis goes ahead.
- Quaid's Dam, Nullinga Dam, 4000ML in Barron system already allocated, Barron scheme system upgrade to take losses, Mulgrave aquifer / mill have all been discussed
- They will put up the options in Nov or Dec
- It is very likely they will be in the Barron in the future for at least the 4000ML
- TCG needs to form an opinion on Cairns water needs and position on them accessing water from the Barron

Action: BD to raise with TCG Board and bring position back to MDIACouncil

Action: Joe to put the Tableland industries position to the Future Water Options Committee

8. Water Act Amendments

- Need to make sure that irrigator's allocations and reliability is protected
- Change from WRP & ROP to Water Entitlement Notices, Operations Manuals and Water Management Protocols. This is meant to reduce red tape and give the water service providers more flexibility. We need to make sure that the Protocols / operations are run to the benefit of the scheme and irrigators and not to the benefit of the water service provider.
- All licence to be converted to Allocations
- Projects of state significance will be entitled to unallocated water even if the scheme is fully allocated if they can prove there is extra water in the scheme. We need to make sure that this does not reduce existing irrigator's water reliability.

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9. Other Business:

Issue of no water in channel on Hansen / Chewko Road at Salvetti farm. A lot of water being taken now land in tree crops etc. It is the depth not volume. Rostering and design flow rate entitlement may need to come into play in this and other areas of the scheme.

- Fish Screen – what is the future plan for the fish screen? SunWater looking at options.

Action: Joe/Bronwyn to write to the Board of SunWater re fish screen / flow rates

- Evan's Position – no longer Council rep. Will keep him on the Committee pending a review of the makeup of the Committee

- Committee Review: TCG and MDFVGA will review the committee e.g. do we want a MSC rep

Action: Joe and Bronwyn to talk to respective Committee's about MDIACouncil Committee representation

10. Next Meeting Date & Agenda Items: TBC

Meeting closed: 1.03pm