



MINUTES OF MEETING – 3 February 2010

Meeting opened at 9.00am at the SunWater Depot Esmond Street, Emerald

Present

Attendees	Representation
Dougall Millar	Chairperson
Geoffrey Kavanagh	Committee Member – Weemah Channel System
Les Fluerty	Committee Member – Weemah Channel System
Robert Ingram	Committee Member – Selma Channel System
Peter Galea	Committee Member – Selma Channel System
Neek Morawitz	
Tom Wallwork	SunWater – Area Operations Manager North
Peter Collett	SunWater – Service Manager Emerald Depot

1. Apologies

Ian Burnett

2. Previous Minutes

- The minutes of the meeting held on 29 October, 2009 were accepted as distributed.

3. Business Arising from Minutes

SunWater Efficiency Program

- Introduce Tom Wallwork – Area Manager – North. Tom provided a brief overview of his work experience with SunWater.
- The IAC welcomed Tom and proposed sending a letter of thanks to Nev Wogandt, the previous Regional Manager, for his work in the Emerald area and with the IAC.
- The SunWater Emerald office is now part of the North Region. The area includes Emerald, Eton, Collinsville and Moranbah schemes and pipelines.
- Many administration tasks and activities are being centralised to Brisbane. This will result in staff reductions across SunWater including the Brisbane office.
- The transition period runs until June 2011. By then all SunWater process will have been reviewed and streamlined and managed by the trimmed down SunWater.
- The IAC members raised concerns and disappointment about the changes, particularly the loss of administration support for customers in the Emerald office. Losing the administration staff and their experience with customer and operational (ROP) issues could lead to degradation in customer support services if Brisbane is not adequately prepared to accept the new responsibilities. Some members noted that the administration staff had been removed from Emerald and functions transferred to Biloela in a previous re-organisation which lead to poor customer support and resulted in invoicing being almost 2 years over-due. The administration staff were re-introduced to Emerald to address these issues.
- The driving business needs to improve corporate efficiency were recognised by all members. However, concerns were raised about SunWater's ability to deliver the business efficiencies while still continuing meet service targets and to provide an appropriate level of customer support. A continued active involvement by the SunWater Emerald team with the local customers will be essential to the success of the efficiency program.

- Tom Wallwork stressed that SunWater would continue to work closely with all local the Irrigation Advisory Committees across SunWater schemes.

Bedford Weir Update

- No new information since the last meeting. Investigations by WH&S Division continuing. SunWater appeared in court briefly in December and action was deferred until March 2010.
- Geoff Kavanagh asked about releases to Bedford Weir. Peter Collett advised the Committee that since 1 Jul 2009 a total of 12,725ML have been released from Fairbairn Dam for Bedford Weir. Of this volume 7,221ML was to satisfy customer orders with the balance of 5,500ML to maintain Bedford Weir levels at 1.0 to 1.5m above nominal operating level.
- Geoff Kavanagh reminded SunWater that the removal of the fabridam was impacting on the system yield and needs to be included in the water accounting process. The impact during years of 100% will be minimal, but in years of reduced allocation the loss of the extra storage could have a significant impact on available water unless Fairbairn Dam overflowed.
- Tom Wallwork undertook to clarify the issue of how SunWater would deal with the water savings from channel lining. However, he advised that decisions on Bedford Weir and fabridams generally were being considered at Board level and a firm plan will not be developed until the current legal proceedings have run their course, but SunWater will continue to keep the IAC and other stakeholders informed on the progress toward a decision.

Fairbairn Dam and Weir Levels

- Peter Collett provided a summary of the current dam and weir levels at 28 October 2009:

	Level	Volume	Percent	24 Hour Change	Over-Topping
Fairbairn Dam	201.35	911,531	70%	+1.9%	-2.88m
Bedford Weir	123.03	18,829	82%	+2.6%	+0.31m
Bingegang Weir	102.76	7,725	96%	+0.4%	-0.14m
Tartrus Weir	84.060	19,605	163%	+30.6%	+2.31m

Inflows into Fairbairn were 25,186ML over the last 24 hours.

- Geoff Kavanagh noted that the current good rains in the area might lead DERM to initiate a First Post Winter Flow event. The event can be triggered by DERM if the general stream levels rise at least 1.5m between Comet River junction and Bedford Weir. If the event is triggered, then the daily inflows (up to the limit of the outlet works) must be released from Fairbairn for 19 days or until inflows reduce to below 20ML/day. *(Subsequent to the meeting the first post winter flow requirements were triggered by DERM on 4 February 2010)*

ROP Issues

- Forward Draw – prior to Christmas some irrigation made enquiries about introduction of a Forward Draw product for the Scheme. While Forward Draw is allowed for by the ROP, it is not a product offered by SunWater. General discussion ensued, but it was decided that the advantage of being able to forward draw was out-weighed by the problems resulting from its introduction. The issues raise included:
 - Forward Draw cannot be used until after Allocations are announced thus restricting the use of Forward Draw to late in the water year.
 - Forward Draw would impact on the water market and could be used to distort water pricing for temporary transfers.
 - Forward Drawn water would need to be accounted for separately from Carryover and Announced Allocation water. This would further complicate the water accounting and introduce extra costs.
 - SunWater is focusing on efficient operation of the scheme and it is unlikely that SunWater would be offering new products and thus extra costs in the short to medium term.

- ROP Seasonal Water Assignment Limits – In December 2009 a number of Temporary Transfer applications were rejected by SunWater because the ROP Seasonal Assignment transfer limit had been reached in the Tartrus Weir region (Mackenzie zones B, C & D). Customer allocations in the region total 8,182ML and a minimum of 5,182 must remain in the region. This leaves a cap of 3,000ML per year that can be Temporary Transferred out of the region unless other allocation is transferred in. The IAC confirmed that SunWater had correctly interpreted the ROP rules and that the intent of the ROP was also being met. It was noted that if the Seasonal Water Assignment limit was removed there would be an impact on the reliability of water further upstream in the Mackenzie.
- SunWater will contact DERM to arrange a meeting with key irrigators in the Tartrus region to outline the limits on Seasonal Water Assignments.

Intersafe Project

- The project aim is to upgrade infrastructure assets that have been assessed as HIGH or EXTREME WH&S Risk. The works include the installation of:
 - Regulating gates
 - Walkways and handrails
 - Screens
- AWMA were awarded a contract in August 2009 (www.awma.au.com). The final measure up for Emerald structures was conducted in November 2009. A total of 61 structures will be changed at an estimated cost of \$1.4million.
- Installation will be in June/August 2010. Two by three week shut-downs will be needed in on the Weemah Section and one three week shut-down is needed for the Selma Section. The proposed dates were discussed and generally endorsed by the IAC. SunWater will arrange for shed meetings to confirm the dates with the wider channel customer group.

Asset Management and Maintenance

Peter Collett provided a brief overview of current works including:

- Selma Siphon – long radius siphon bend planned for installation in late February
- Selma Pump Refurbishment – pump 2 completed with the motor scheduled for refurbishment in March / April 2010. Dougall Miller stressed the importance of the Selma pumps to the operation of the system when dam levels are below EL201 (approx). Peter Collett concurred and reminded the Committee that one pump and motor is refurbished each year as part of the on-going preventive maintenance program for the Selma Channel.
- Drain De-silting – LN1 is completed. The next drain for de-silting will be RR6
- Dam and Weir Inspection Works – on-going with no un-expected issues.
- Meters – replacement program planning in FY10/11 with replacements commencing in FY11/12. The planning process will include consultation with customers to rationalise the new installations by moving and/or consolidating meter off-takes where appropriate. Geoff Kavanagh recommended that the new meters include telemetry that can be accessed by irrigators to assist with water management.

New Offtake Applications

- Small Volume Users – with the increasing subdivision of properties in the Talafa and Big John Roads area into Rural Living blocks (generally 20 acres); SunWater is receiving an increasing number of applications for small off-takes (1-2 ML/year). SunWater is looking at rationalising the existing off-takes and limiting new off-takes to 2 or 3 locations along Weemah. The IAC was generally happy with this arrangement, provided the small volume users did not impact on the operation of the channel. In particular, the small volume users need to be aware of regular channel maintenance shut-down periods, acrolein applications and the impact during periods when the channel is operating at capacity.
- Doug Slack and Dan Hemmings have approached SunWater through 4T Consultants to enquire about using a drain (either RR4/1, RR7/2, RR7/1 or RR6) to run approximately 1,000ML per year into Retreat Creek for them to re-lift out onto properties on the northern side of Theresa Creek. SunWater has advised 4T that it is not appropriate to use the drains to deliver this volume of water and has requested that they investigate other options.

Vegetation Regrowth Management

- The Vegetation Management Act 2009 has not impacted significantly on operations. SunWater has a general exemption for essential infrastructure management.
- SunWater will be submitting PMAVs for all SunWater land including flood margin land, recreation areas and facilities at Fairbairn Dam, as well as, all channels and drains. SunWater will consult with lessees and adjoining landholders during the preparation of the PMAVs.

Weed Control and Slashing

- Ground Control Services have taken over the slashing contract. They have completed their second full slash of Selma and Weemah Channels.
- SunWater has been advised that acrolein will continue to be available in the medium-term.

General Business

- There was no other business.

4. Next Meeting

TBA

Meeting Closed at 12 noon.

MINUTES CONFIRMED

Chairperson

SunWater Manager

Date

Date