

Dawson Valley Customer Advisory Committee

Date: Thursday 26 March 2026

Time: 9:00am - 11:00am

Location: Hotel Theodore, 27 – 29 The Boulevard, Theodore.

Attendees:

Customer representatives: Mitch Anderson, Simon Green., Andrew French, Scott Becker, Kirk Anderson, Greg Hutchinson.

Sunwater representatives: Colin Bendall (Executive General Manager – Operations), Craig Cahill (Regional General Manager – Fitzroy), Daryl Conway (Operations Manager), Caley Pearce (Customer Engagement Advisor), Tom Ridgway (Head of Dam Safety, online).

Department representatives: Ariane Leyden.

Apologies: Scott Stevens

Minutes:

Agenda items		
Item no.	Item	Presenter
1	Meeting open	Daryl Conway
2	Previous meeting overview/ actions	Daryl Conway
3	Operations update	Daryl Conway
4	Dam Safety update	Tom Ridgway
5	Customer Systems update	Colin Bendall
6	Customer Touchpoint Survey update	Caley Pearce
7	General business	Daryl Conway
8	Meeting close	Daryl Conway

1. Meeting open

Meeting opened at 9:00am. Introductions and Acknowledgement of Country delivered.

2. Previous Actions

Sunwater presented an update on actions from the previous meeting, including a breakdown of Moura Off-stream Storage pumping costs. Sunwater explained the variation in electricity metrics reported in the Service and Performance Plans (S&PPs) was attributable to operating two pumps rather than one. Sunwater advised that it is confident the data presented in the S&PPs is accurate.

- **Member question:** Member asked why Sunwater would choose to operate two pumps instead of one, given that operating one pump is more cost-effective.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater replied it's to do with time criticality, for example, two pumps are generally used for the first water harvesting to ensure maximum capture during time-critical harvesting opportunities.
- **Member question:** Member suggested changing the operating rules to extend the period in which Sunwater can pump, may make operating one pump more effective.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater replied this matter is included in the water review plan, and will be considered in detail as part of that process. Sunwater noted that the current operating rules clearly define when pumping can and cannot occur.
- **Member question:** Member asked what the water level was before the last rain event.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater replied it was 100 – 150 ML below full supply level. A rainfall event two weeks prior resulted in water spilling over the spillway for around 24 hours, estimated at approximately 900 ML. Following this event, Sunwater opened the outlet and released water back into the river.
- **Member question:** Member asked whether the Resource Operating Licence (ROL) required Sunwater to release water following the spill event.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater advised that the release was not required under the ROL. The decision was an operational one, made to reduce the storage level, based on advice from the Dam Safety team to return the storage to normal operating levels.
- **ACTION:** Sunwater to review MOSS ROL in relation to risk profile and timing of releases following a spill.
- **Member discussion:** Members and Sunwater discussed the storage batters. Sunwater advised that MOSS was constructed as a temporary solution over 26 years ago and was built using materials considered suitable at the time.
- **ACTION:** Sunwater to review the benefits of changing the batter at MOSS including associated costs.

3. Operations Update

Sunwater provided an update on Announced Allocations (AA), advising that a review was undertaken in early March. As a result, Medium Priority (MP) allocations in the Upper Dawson are at 70 per cent, Medium Priority A (MPA) at 90 per cent, and the Lower Dawson is at 91 per cent. Sunwater also advised

that damage to Sunwater assets across the state resulting from the recent significant weather event will be covered by insurance.

- **Member question:** Member asked if meters were read at the end of December, noting there had been no communication regarding meter reads.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater replied, that meters were read in January and acknowledged there could have been better communication regarding the decision.
- **Member question:** Member raised concerns about gauging stations on local creeks owned by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), advising that readings at several stations, including Theodore, Lonesome Creek and Castle Creek, were inaccurate during the recent weather event. The member noted their understanding that while the gauges are owned by the BoM, maintenance is the responsibility of Banana Shire Council (BSC). The member emphasised that accurate readings are critical during significant weather events and that inaccurate information poses a safety risk.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater advised it would raise the issue with the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) within BSC to escalate the matter.
- **ACTION:** Sunwater to escalate concerns regarding inaccurate BoM gauge readings at Lonesome Creek, Castle Creek and Theodore to the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG).
- **Member question:** Member asked about access to readings from the Smart Scheme gauges and meters, noting the project has cost \$600,000 from the scheme annuity balance.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater replied the \$600,000 expenditure for the Dawson Valley Smart Scheme project related to LiDAR and bathymetry. Sunwater confirmed that gauges have been installed, however they target low flows, they are low-cost, (approximately \$1600 each). Sunwater noted that traditional gauging stations, such as those used by Sunwater and the BoM typically cost over \$50,000.
- **Member question:** Member asked why CAC members were not consulted regarding the Smart Scheme project and associated costs, and queried the value of the CAC is if members are now consulted on project of this nature.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater advised that the Smart Schemes project was included as part of the approved Price Path and is intended to support efficient operation of the scheme into the future. Sunwater offered to hold an out-of-session information session on Smart Schemes for interested members.
- **ACTION:** Sunwater to organise an information session for CAC members on Smart Schemes.

4. Dam Safety Update

Sunwater presented on the Dam Safety Management program requirements, determined by the *Water Act 2000 (QLD)*. Sunwater explained it adopts a risk-based approach to upgrades to ensure value for money is achieved for long-term improvements works.

- **Member question:** Member questioned the cost-effectiveness of the dam safety program at Moura Off-stream Storage (MOSS), noting the current dam safety review cost of approximately \$650,000. The member also queried why independent consultants are required to prepare reports, rather than Sunwater undertaking internal risk assessments and determining whether consultant recommendations should be implemented.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater acknowledged the concern and advised that the use of independent consultants is a requirement of the Dam Safety Regulator. Sunwater explained that

the \$650,000 cost is largely attributable to the baseline assessment required as part of the dam safety review. Sunwater noted that, in comparison, dam owners elsewhere in Australia are paying in excess of \$2 million for similar assessments. Sunwater advised that consultants generally adopt a conservative risk position, and that Sunwater reviews consultant recommendations to apply a pragmatic, owner-based risk lens, which can avoid unnecessary expenditure and result in significant cost savings.

- **Member question:** Member asked why the budget for the 20-year dam safety review increased from approximately \$340,000 in FY24 to approximately \$660,000 in FY26.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater advised that dam safety review costs have increased significantly and have been escalated in line with other storages. Sunwater noted that three recent dam safety reviews were all in excess of \$650,000 and advised there has been a substantial increase in consultant fees across the market.
- **Member question:** Member asked whether Sunwater operates other structures similar to MOSS that require water to be pumped into storage.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater advised that there are several balancing storages similar to MOSS. Sunwater noted that operating costs for off-stream storages are generally lower than for other types of storages.
- **Member question:** Member asked why the dam safety study takes approximately three years to complete
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater advised that the majority of costs associated with the study will be incurred in FY27, with some close-out costs expected in FY28. Sunwater explained that the study involves a full reassessment of hydrology, hydraulics, geology, geotechnical conditions and structural stability. Sunwater noted that while an initial timeframe of 12 months had previously been indicated, the program was extended due to procurement requirements, market processes, and the time required to assess and respond to consultant recommendations.
- **Member question:** Member asked whether an analysis had been undertaken of the costs associated with operating MOSS, including the cost per megalitre. The member expressed concern about the ongoing costs of MOSS, stating it provides limited benefit to irrigators while costs are recovered through pricing.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater acknowledged the concerns raised and agreed to provide further information on historical costs and alternative options for MOSS at a future meeting.
- **Member discussion:** Members and Sunwater further discussed MOSS operations, regulatory requirements, referable dam status, dam safety studies, flood impact assessments and ALARP assessments.
- **ACTION:** Sunwater to provide an analysis of MOSS historical costs and alternative options, including cost per megalitre (MP and MPA), comparison of MOSS costs against budget, total costs attributable to the scheme, and costs incurred over the past five years.

5. Customer Systems Update

Sunwater provided an update on Customer Systems, including the Orion Customer Authentication project, which will introduce multifactor authentication (MFA) for the customer portal and mobile app. Sunwater also provided an update on the CASPr rebate and introduced the Customer Systems Renewal project, which will replace the current Orion system.

- **Member question:** A member asked why the QRIDA rebate process had changed, noting that the process was previously managed by Sunwater and that the new process is more difficult.

- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater advised that the QRIDA rebate process is managed by the Queensland Government. Sunwater clarified that the CASPr rebate is separate from the QRIDA rebate process.
- **Member question:** A member asked whether SMS could be included as an option for receiving the one-time passcode (OTP) for MFA, instead of email only.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater advised that it would raise the request with the MFA project team for consideration.
- **ACTION:** Sunwater to ask the MFA project team whether SMS can be added as an option for receiving one-time passcodes (OTP).
- **Member question:** Member requested that allocation, usage and river harvesting data be included in the Sunwater customer app. The member also noted that more data had previously been available on the Sunwater website, including historical gauging station data dating back more than 20 years.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater advised it would investigate whether this data is available and whether it can be added to Sunwater Online and the customer app.
- **ACTION:** Sunwater to investigate if usage, allocation and river harvesting data can be added to Sunwater online and the customer app.
- **Member question:** Member asked whether customers could opt out of MFA, noting that it can take up to 60 minutes to receive emails via satellite internet connections.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater advised that MFA is a mandatory security requirement and is not optional. Sunwater agreed to share the feedback regarding connectivity issues with the project team.
- **ACTION:** Sunwater to share member feedback regarding MFA and satellite connectivity constraints with the project team.

6. Customer Touchpoint Survey

Sunwater presented the findings from the 2025 Customer Touchpoint Survey.

- **Member question:** Member asked why the survey completion rate was low.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater advised that while the completion rate was low, this is typical of online surveys. Sunwater also advised that additional survey and engagement methods will be introduced in the coming year to improve participation.

7. General Business

- **Sunwater question:** Sunwater invited members to provide feedback on the effectiveness of CAC meetings and sought views on whether members would prefer the CAC to be chaired by customers rather than Sunwater.
- **Member discussion:** Members advised they would like greater transparency around decision-making processes, including visibility of feedback provided through Regulated Asset Base (RAB) engagement, Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) decisions, and clearer links between CAC discussions and financial decisions affecting the scheme. Members noted that, historically, the only tangible outcome achieved through the CAC has been the carryover extension. Members indicated they were supportive of Sunwater continuing to chair the CAC.

- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater acknowledged the concerns raised and suggested that the current MOSS review could be used as a test case to trial new ways of working with the CAC and improve transparency and outcomes.
- **Member discussion:** Members and Sunwater discussed the aging nature of the scheme, including road crossings and infrastructure constraints that limit system performance.
- **Discussion:** Sunwater advised that discussions have progressed with the department regarding meter verification. Sunwater noted an issue raised by a member regarding a malfunctioning meter that did not display an error message. Members and Sunwater discussed broader issues relating to meters and the validation process.
- **Discussion:** Sunwater and members discussed works underway or planned at Glebe, Gyranda and Moura weirs
- **Member question:** Member asked for an update on the previous action relating to the 20 per cent differential.
- **Sunwater response:** Sunwater advised that this matter is linked to the water plan review and as previously noted, cannot be progressed until the review is completed.

8. Meeting close

Meeting closed at 11:24 am. Next meeting scheduled for August 2026.

9. Actions

Action item	Owner	Status
Sunwater to review MOSS ROL in relation to risk profile and timing of releases following a spill.	Daryl Conway	In progress
Sunwater to review the benefits of changing the batter at MOSS including associated costs.	Daryl Conway	In progress
Sunwater to escalate concerns regarding inaccurate BoM gauge readings at Lonesome Creek, Castle Creek and Theodore to the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG).	Daryl Conway	In progress
Sunwater to organise an information session for CAC members on Smart Schemes.	Daryl Conway / Caley Pearce	In progress
Sunwater to provide an analysis of MOSS historical costs and alternative options, including cost per megalitre (MP and MPA), comparison of MOSS costs against budget, total costs attributable to the scheme, and costs incurred over the past five years.	Daryl Conway / Tom Ridgeway	In progress
Sunwater to ask the MFA project team whether SMS can be added as an option for receiving one-time passcodes (OTP).	Colin Bendall / Caley Pearce	In progress

Sunwater to investigate if usage, allocation and river harvesting data can be added to Sunwater online and the customer app.	Caley Pearce	In progress
Sunwater to share member feedback regarding MFA and satellite connectivity constraints with the project team.	Colin Bendall / Caley Pearce	Complete

10. Approval and review

Chair:	Daryl Conway
Minutes:	Caley Pearce
Date:	26 March 2026

Phone: 13 15 89

Email: customersupport@sunwater.com.au

Live chat: [sunwater.com.au](https://www.sunwater.com.au) (Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm)

Post: PO Box 15536 City East QLD 4002

Fax: (07) 3036 6482

Delivering water for prosperity