

Date: Tuesday, 21 March 2023

Time: 9:00AM – 11:00AM

Location: Maryborough Services & Citizens Memorial Club

Attendees:

Customer Advisory Committee members: Scott Scruton, Scott Maxell, Norm Muller, Scott Roxburgh, Scott Allcott

Department of Regional Development Manufacturing & Water members: Clayton Vale, Brian Latchman,

Sunwater representatives: Darren Large (General Manager, Burnett and Lower Mary), Shannon Lancaster (Operations Manager, Burnett and Lower Mary), Emily Caleo (Customer Engagement Team Lead), Sheridan Ward (Stakeholder Advisor), Andrew Cronin (Energy Analyst), Melissa Lascelles (Energy Manager), Andrew Maughan (Operations Coordinator, Burnett and Lower Mary), Anita Steele (Senior Water Industry Advisor)

Apologies:

Lance Stone, Adam Doyle

Minutes:

Agenda items		
Item no.	item	Presenter
1	Meeting Open	Darren Large
2	Department of Regional Development Manufacturing and Water	DRDMW
3	Energy Update	Melissa Lascelles & Andrew Cronin
4	Lower Mary WSS Operations Update	Darren Large & Shannon Lancaster
5	General Business	All
6	Meeting Close	All

1. Sunwater Heading

- Introductions
- Overview of agenda
- Apologies
- Previous meeting minutes confirmed.

2. Department of Regional Development Manufacturing and Water (RDMW)

2.1. Release of draft Mary Basin water plan (WP)

RDMW presented from a consultation pack. Key consultation documents available at rdmw.qld.gov.au.

- RDMW advised that they are currently doing an engagement roadshow, to consult with stakeholders regarding the Mary Basin draft WP.
- The consultation period is open for a total of eight weeks and will close on 5:00PM Friday, 21 April 2023.
- Key consultation documents available at rdmw.qld.gov.au include; Notice of availability, Statement of intent, draft Mary Basin WP, draft Mary Basin water management protocol, draft Mary Basin water entitlement notice.
- RDMW covered the proposed new outcomes of the draft plan; general, economic, social, cultural, environmental.
- RDMW advised that the plan contains measures to; develop a monitoring, evaluation & reporting strategy, as well as metering of entitlements.
- RDMW advised that there are a number of unallocated water reserves proposed for the WP.

2.2. Questions and Feedback

- The CAC queried if anyone is able to build a storage on a watercourse.
 - RDMW advised that there is a licensed entity in the table that can build and manage a storage to take water, for the Mary Basin, this is Sunwater.
- The CAC queried what the next steps are, after the consultation phase.
 - RDMW confirmed that the current plan expires in May 2024 and a replacement must be completed before then. After the consultation period closes (21 April), any potential changes will be investigated, before a final draft plan is released for consultation.
- The CAC queried if there are any overland flow restrictions being introduced in the new plan.
 - RDMW advised that these changes are not included. Similarly, no changes to groundwater plans either.

3. Energy Update

3.1. Electricity Audit

- Sunwater advised that energy is our second largest expense, for this reason there has been a lot of resources invested in the energy management space.
- Sunwater presented the purpose and outcomes of GHDs energy audits. (2018-19 data)
 - Confirm baseline energy consumption information.
 - Provide benchmark indicators by asset.
 - Confirm commercial arrangements i.e., Regulated Retail Tariff vs Contestable.

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- Opportunity for embedded generation (renewables, water storage, gensets)
- Operational optimisation (peak demand, time of use)
- Identify opportunities for low cost and short pay back efficiency projects:
 - Monitoring equipment (pump efficiency, metering)
 - Power quality issues (power factor correction, variable speed drives)
 - Maintenance required.
- Sunwater advised that “electricity dashboards” are being created to monitor usage so we can optimise cost efficiencies.
- Energy costs moderate (\$305k)
- Change in tariffs will indicatively increase annual costs by \$80k (26%)
- Reduction in extent which variable costs can be targeted with the shift to flat energy rate tariff structures.
- Insufficient level of available data (no pressure data)
- Pump stations operating within system efficiency range of 69 - 71% (3.8 – 4.0 kWh/ML.m)
- Use of kWh/(ML.m) and kWh/ML provides a comprehensive assessment of energy performance
- Of opportunities considered, peak demand management at Owanyilla and Main Road, noting the recommendation is how the pumps are operated to reduce costs and Sunwater is operating the pumps as per recommendation.
- Sunwater advised that the forward forecasts for electricity have been extremely elevated due to the substantial increase in cost of gas and coal as fuel for thermal generation. Further to the increased cost of fuel, there had been a delay on the construction and commissioning of new renewable plant, which has also contributed (and will continue to contribute) to the rising cost of electricity.
- The Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan (QEJP) is now center point in system and commercial planning. This has strong effect on long term pricing for both electricity and water., Despite plans for successful renewable generation build and low cost clean energy, pockets of significant volatility are still expected to realise, Particularly at times of low renewable availability. Here, the lack of environmental generation being met by less maintained thermal plant means that very tight (and potentially less stable) supply/demand balance ensues. Price is likely to be lower on average, but there will be pockets of extreme volatility.
- An annual solar assessment of pump stations is undertaken to identify opportunities for installation. The assessment for Lower Mary Pump Stations illustrates a high export percentage, the priority is for sites which are consuming the solar generation ‘behind the meter’ to reduce consumption, costs and emissions. Further analysis to shift consumption patterns to compliment solar will continue, to validate an opportunity. As well as meeting investment criteria.
- Sunwater advised that electricity providers in other states are starting to penalise customers that export to the grid during peak day times. Which is why it is important that a site is consuming as much generation as possible to maximise the benefit.
- Sunwater gave overview of the dashboards.
- Sunwater noted that there are Key Performance indicators to work towards to ensure we are maximising efficiencies for energy consumption and costs.

3.2. Questions and Feedback

- The CAC advised that the horticultural/agricultural landscape in the Lower Mary WSS is changing, and the requirements to pump water will become more consistent/increase.

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- Sunwater advised that until those changes are made and considering where the energy market is at that time, it will be hard to know what costs will be. If the market changes to a “whole of government” pricing structure, it will be consistent costing.
- Sunwater advised that if we do move both pumping sites to a whole of government pricing structure, this will only result in 5-10% of savings.
- These pumping requirements will also be dependent on weather and rainfall.
- The CAC queried if the retirement of fossil fuels, means that solar becomes a more viable option.
 - Sunwater confirmed that during middle of the day, yes. \$0 floors in solar means that at low pricing it bottoms out to \$0. Any concentration of load around that period is a positive impact. The solar period holds low, but the evening peak becomes more volatile which means upward pressure in pricing.

4. Lower Mary WSS Operations Update

4.1. Operations update

Sunwater presented from [slide pack](#).

- Sunwater presented insights for upcoming shutdown periods.
- Sunwater confirmed the package of works to be completed.
- The CAC did not raise any issues with the proposed shutdown times.

5. General Business

- Sunwater advised that the referral for the Queensland Competition Authorities (QCA) Irrigation Price Path 2025 (IPP25) has been received from the minister. Sunwaters submission is due in November 2023 and there will be customer consultation included in our process.
 - Sunwater noted that other stakeholders will also be consulted as representatives for customers.
- Request for an update on the Off-Stream Storage at the next CAC meeting.

6. Meeting Closed

Meeting closed 10:04AM

7. Approval and Review

Chair:	Darren Large (General Manager, Burnett and Lower Mary)
Minutes:	Emily Caleo (Customer Engagement Team Lead)
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