

Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday 4th February 2020

Time: 10:05 am

Location: Anglican Church Hall, Ruby Street, Emerald.

- Attendees:**
- Members of the IAC - Robert Ingram (RI), Les Fluerty (LF), Neek Morawitz (NM) & Paul Wortley (PW).
 - Fairbairn Irrigation Network (FIN)– Geoff Beard (GB), Hamish Millar (HM) & Donna Lewis
 - Emerald Shire Council – Peter Manning (PM) & Jason Hoolihan (JH)
 - Curragh Mine: Crystal Merlow (CM)
 - Ensham Mine: Neil Dale (ND) & observer Corinne Urg (PHD student UQ)
 - SunWater (SW): William Weaver (WW) & Jason Smith (JS)

Chair: Robert Ingram

Minutes: Donna Lewis

| Agenda Items | | |
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| Item No. | Agenda Item | Action Point |
| 1. | Introduction and Welcome RI opened the meeting at 10:05am & welcomed everyone. | |
| 2. | Apologies Matthew Barnes, Neville Brownlie, Nigel Burnett, Dion Roberts, Ross Burnett & Peter Galea. | |
| 3. | <p>General Business</p> <p>WW & JS gave a presentation regarding the Water Security of the Nogoa Mackenzie Water Supply Scheme. <i>Note – most of the information in the presentation was put together before the recent rainfall.</i></p> <p>3.1. Fairbairn Dam at record low dam levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.97% as at 20/01/2020 – i.e. 191,663m AHD and 117,622ML • BoM long range rainfall forecast of 50-100mm for February is below median and February to April is below median of 176mm. • Note - Due to recent rainfall (80,000ML inflow) there will be an Announced Allocation (AA) for Medium Priority (MP) water tomorrow (Wednesday 5th Feb) of around 7 or 8 %. JS to verify that 100% High Priority (HP) is available for 2020/21 before SunWater make the offer of allocation for MP this year. <p>3.2. Practical access and delivery of water at low levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Maraboon geometry is that it is a river surrounded by floodplain and only a limited number of deep pools are expected if extreme low levels eventuate. There is potential of isolated pools that will require pumping or earthworks. | Action 7 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The old river channel is comparatively shallow and therefore evaporation is likely to accelerate. • Bathymetric survey of Fairbairn Dam is currently being undertaken and results are expected by end of February. The bathymetric survey of Leslie Dam showed a 0.3% reduction in total volume and this translated to a 15% reduction at current levels. <p>3.3. Forecast water level at the start of the 2020 water year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using worst case scenarios (taking into account the post Jan inflow) it won't be necessary to start low level pumping until October 2020. <p>3.4. What if – scenario testing for the 2020 HP Announced Allocation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario 1: likely case – ROP rules 'as is', current storage curve, no inflows, forecast use – discussion with FIN, calibrated evaporation (pan), one release to Bedford/ Bingegang 1700 ML with losses prior to July. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Result at 01/07/20 – Fairbairn WL 189.88-Weirs WL 14/01-HP 0% & Carryover (CO) 1,653ML • Scenario 2: optimistic case - as for Scenario 1 with less conservative evaporation, no release required for top up of Bedford/Bingegang. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Result at 01/07/20 –Fairbairn WL 190.24-Weirs WL 14/01-HP 0% & CO 2,895ML ○ Result at 01/07/20 –Fairbairn WL 190.24-Weirs WL FSL-HP 0% & CO 14,084ML • Scenario 3: storage curve reduced - as for Scenario 1 with low level storage reduced by 15% (1.3% less storage overall). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Result at 01/07/20 –Fairbairn WL 189.83-Weirs WL 14/01-HP 0% & CO 0ML • Scenario 4: what height needed in the dam to have carry over offered and 100% HP allocation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Result at 01/07/20 –Fairbairn WL 192.9-Weirs WL 14/01-HP 100% & CO 22,600ML - <i>Volume change of 121,400ML; 123,000 was the change in volume last year events March to May.</i> ○ Result at 01/07/20 –Fairbairn WL 192.6-Weirs WL FSL-HP 100% & CO 22,600ML • Scenario 5: what height needed in the dam to have carry over offered and 50% HP allocation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Result at 01/07/20 –Fairbairn WL 192.25-Weirs WL 14/01-HP 50% & CO 22,600ML – <i>Volume change of 87,582ML</i> ○ Result at 01/07/20 –Fairbairn WL 191.91-Weirs WL FSL-HP 50% & CO 22,600ML <p>3.5. Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a water security working group (SW, DNRME, Customers) to consult with impacted parties and identify and implement practical measures for water delivery. SW to facilitate. | <p>Action 8</p> |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion regarding current water sharing rules and the method of calculating HP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need to reassess ROP rules with regard to adjustments required when critically low levels impact. ○ For critically low water years, change is needed to the rule of setting aside a full year’s storage loss before making allocations. ○ RI requested that SW draw up a couple of different proposals for the IAC to consider before completing a brief to DNRME to amend/change the current rules. | Action 9 |
| 4. | <p>New Business</p> <p>4.1. Post Winter Flow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Winter flow was triggered however due to dam level (< 195.1) no release was required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerns raised about when environmental flow is required. RI noted that scientific evidence tabled and passed by parliament is required to make any changes. ○ A gauging station at St Helen’s could help provide information. <p>4.2. Water Sharing Rules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HM raised concern around water sharing rules on the river. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HM’s company is treated as one customer however in the past they would have been several entities. ○ Discussion was held around the delivery of peak and off peak. There do not appear to be any written rules around the deliver. JS asked that if anyone has any old information regarding rules to please share it. ○ Suggested that SW contact previous managers to see if they were aware of any rules. ○ Discussion around capacity constraints. FIN may be able to assist in providing extra water via Selma Channel. ○ Access to information from Curragh gauging stations could be helpful. CM will follow up to see if this is possible. ○ NM asked if the Bridge Flats Gauging Station data could be available on the department website. JS to follow up <p>4.3. Peter Manning leaving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM, Manager Water Utilities with council is leaving. Jason Hoolihan, CHRC Manager Infrastructure will be filling in while recruiting is being completed. <p>4.4. Spillway Upgrade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JS reported that Fairbairn Dam is perfectly safe even if it should spill. The spillway upgrade project team expect to be finished and demobilised by Easter 2020. Crest works will continue until December. • QCA recommendations regarding costs for the spillway upgrade should be released in May. | <p>Action 10</p> <p>Action 11</p> |

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| 5. | Meeting Closed Meeting closed 11:15 am | |
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| Open Action Item Summary | | | |
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| Ref No. | Description | Assigned To | Due Date |
| 1. | Channel Lining Project Update <i>(from previous meeting)</i> | GB | Next meeting |
| 2. | Investigate how much high priority water was carried over. <i>(from previous meeting)</i> | JS | Supplementary |
| 3. | Investigate why quarterly losses were not applied until November. <i>(from previous meeting)</i> | JS | Supplementary |
| 4. | Investigate the possibility of seeking drought relief funding for low-level pumping. <i>(from previous meeting)</i> | JS | Supplementary |
| 5. | Verify costs of Bathymetric Survey <i>(from previous meeting)</i> | JS | Supplementary |
| 6. | Seek clarification regarding capacity loss in the river system due to removal of the Bedford Bag. <i>(from previous meeting)</i> | WW | Next meeting |
| 7. | Verify that 100% HP is available for 20/21 before SunWater make the offer of allocation for MP this year. | WW | Prior to AA |
| 8. | Establish a water security working group | WW & JS | |
| 9. | Draw up a couple of different proposals for IAC to consider before completing a brief to DNRME to amend/change the current rules. | WW & JS | 2 weeks before next meeting |
| 10. | Investigate if information from Curragh gauging stations can be shared. | CM | Next meeting |
| 11. | See if Bridge Flats Gauging Station data could be made available on the department website. | JS | Next meeting |

Next Meeting:

Date: Early March. *Will need to have results of Bathymetric Survey before holding the meeting.*

Location: Anglican Church Hall