

Town Water Risk Reduction Program—Outcomes and action items

Meeting 14 | 23 March 2022, 9:30 – 11:30 am

Attendees

Table 1. Attendees.

Invitees	Guests	Others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clr Bill West, Local Government NSW (items 4 (part) to 12) • Mr Brendan Guiney, NSW Water Directorate • Mr Michael Blackmore, Director Local Water Utilities, DPE – Water • Mr Aaron Drenovski, Goldenfields Water • Dr Katrina Wall, NSW Health Water Unit. • Ms Rebel Thomson, Namoi Unlimited Joint Organisation of Councils (items 1 to 7) • Dr Annalisa Contos, Atom Consulting (items 1 to 7) • Ms Melissa Gibbs, Office of Local Government • Mr Graham Kennett, Kyogle Council (items 1 to 7) • Ms Erin Cini – Director Town Water Risk Reduction Program (Chair) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Amanda Chadwick, Executive Director Water Sector Reform, DPE Water • Mr Shaun McBride, Chief Economist, LGNSW • Ms Fiona Conlon, TWRRP strategic planning pilot coordinator. 	<p>Town Water Risk Reduction Program team members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Sascha Moege • Dr Nanda Altavilla • Mr Josh Tickell • Mr Andrew Fraser • Ms Sonya Cochrane • Mr Glen Colley (Secretariat)

Apologies

- Mr Graham Attenborough, Chief Operating Officer, DPE Water
- Ms Kerryn Conroy, Principal Policy Officer, Office of Local Government Mr David Kirby, Brewarrina Shire Council
- Mr Peter Marczan, Environment Protection Authority
- Ms Carmel Krogh, Independent Advisor to DPE Water.

Outcomes

Table 2. Agenda items and outcomes.

Agenda item	Outcomes
1	Acknowledgement of country/welcome
2	Administrative matters- Declarations of conflicts of interest <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Bill West – Cowra Shire Council – TWRRP IWCM Pilot• Ms Annalisa Contos – Atom Consulting – Griffith City Council IWCM pilot, Incident and emergency management project• Ms Rebel Thomson - Namoi JO TWRRP Trade Waste pilot• Mr Graham Kennett - Kyogle Council - Potential WaterNSW pilot.
3	Outcomes/actions from the previous meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Panel received a briefing from the TWRRP team on the outcomes and actions from the previous meeting, which were accepted.• There were no outstanding actions.

4

Draft regulatory framework update

The TWRRP team provided an update on the working draft. The TWRRP team confirmed that:

- The intention of the consultation process is to share the regulatory framework with a broader group than those who have already engaged in the collaboration process to design the framework. The department expects to make changes in response to feedback on the consultation draft.
- A summary of specific feedback provided in the working draft consultation process, and the slides presented to today's SAP meeting, will be shared with the CEO NSW Water Sector, when approval is sought to distribute the draft framework for consultation.

GUIDANCE:

- Panel members provided the following feedback:
 - A Panel member reiterated their concern about the short time frame for the development and finalisation of the framework and advised that there is a perception from some stakeholders that the department is rushing to deliver a regulatory framework by 1 July 2022.
 - The broad support of the sector and willingness to engage was noted. However, there is a need to be clear about what is trying to be regulated and what is trying to be addressed through the new framework.
 - A Panel member noted the time needed to share the draft with joint organisation member councils and consult to provide more extensive consolidated feedback. This is consistent with the consultation period for the draft regulatory framework.
 - The Panel supported the draft consultation process but noted that it reserves its view on whether or not it agrees with the content of the draft regulatory framework until the outcome of the consultation process is known.
 - The summary of the information provided when the department publishes the document is arguably more important than the document itself. This should articulate why the department is doing it.
 - In the supporting documentation, the department should also communicate how the draft regulatory framework will address the main changes the sector has requested, including:
 1. Risks identified through the Safe and Secure Water Program (SWWP) are essential to address in consultation with LWUs
 2. The list of things the NSW Water Sector CEO included in his presentation at the LGNSW Conference in Narrabri in February 2022, about what the department has heard and what needs fixing, and
 3. That integrating local water utility strategic planning with the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework of the Local Government Act is essential, so there is a clear pathway to strategic planning.
 - There was discussion about the need to articulate what transition from the old to the new framework will look like, particularly in relation to those local water utilities currently going through the SWPP funding process. It was noted that this is acknowledged in the draft framework, and the consultation process will ask

Agenda item	Outcomes
	<p>the sector for advice on what transition should look like and their transition support requirements.</p> <p>ACTION ITEM 14.2</p> <p>The TWRRP team will update the draft regulatory framework to note that while the Panel and other consultation groups collaborated to design the draft regulatory framework, the document is not endorsed by those groups.</p>
5	<p>WaterNSW pilots – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TWRRP team provided an update on the three WaterNSW pilots. • Noted that Richmond Valley is unable to participate due to the focus on flooding recovery. • Key issues are the complexity in scoping pilots and external factors impacting the ability of LWUs to participate. <p>GUIDANCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TWRRP team might want to think about Rous Water County Council participating instead of Richmond Valley Council. Glen will follow up with Mr Graham Kennett about this suggestion. <p>ACTION ITEM 14.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glen Colley to talk to Graham Kennett about possible inclusion of Rous Water in WaterNSW Catchment pilot.
6	<p>Alternate funding arrangements – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amanda Chadwick provided an update on the progress of this aspect of the program. The TWRRP website has been updated with further information. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No feedback was received from the Panel.

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7	<p>Strategic planning pilots – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TWRRP team and Fiona Conlon provided an update on the progress of its strategic planning pilots. • The TWRRP team noted that the pilots have revealed certain things acutely, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The department needs to commit to the timeframe and should be clear which role it is exercising (ie. are we reviewing a strategic plan, are we funding, are we advising). ○ The IWCM planning process is lengthy and linear and moving away from it is difficult. ○ A shift in thinking is necessary and indicate the support LWU's might need in achieving this. ○ The current funding approach does not enable capacity building as it encourages councils to buy-in strategic planning resources on a project by project basis. <p>GUIDANCE (</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Panel noted that the work is important but asked how the interim findings will inform the draft regulatory improvement process. • It was noted that the strategic planning pilots will help the department to inform the types of things local water utilities might do to show they are meeting the strategic planning outcomes of the draft regulatory framework (eg. through, case studies). • The Panel reiterated advice that there is value in the Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) approach, but its current implementation is flawed (particularly that the IWCM checklist approach is not efficient, and it should not be tied to funding). The main thing is to allow flexibility but also keep IWCM principles. • The department needs to think about the actual problem – why are we doing strategic planning. What are we trying to address? What is lacking in the regulatory framework? How does it fit in with regional and state plans? Does local planning align and if not, why not? • The Panel reiterated the commonly held sector view that a strategic planning process aligned with the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework is the most effective approach. The Panel noted a potential role for joint organisations of councils to address strategic planning capability development (eg. through procurement of shared resources).
8	<p>Councillor training – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TWRRP team provided an update on the progress of program's councillor training work. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <p>No feedback was received from the Panel.</p>

Agenda item	Outcomes
9	<p>TWRRP evaluation – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TWRRP team provided an update on the evaluation of the TWRRP program, including the appointment of Aither Pty Ltd to lead this work. Aither will provide a briefing to the April SAP meeting. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <p>No feedback was received from the Panel.</p>
10	<p>Implementation – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Water Utilities Branch provided an update on recent activities related to implementation. <p>GUIDANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Panel advised that it would like to hear more on the department's other work in relation to secure yield/water security and planning for the next drought. Leakage is important but the source of water is most important. It was noted that the TWRRP WaterNSW pilot with Hay and Murrumbidgee will look at drought security. It was also noted that there is also a risk of overlap between TWRRP and the department's water efficiency program in relation to strategic planning and asset management maturity. <p>ACTION ITEM 14.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Director Water Utilities to provide a briefing on secure yield/water security and planning work being undertaken by the department at the May SAP meeting.
11	<p>Panel items for discussion – The following items were raised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A panel member asked if a briefing could be provided on the TWRRP's operator training work, The team advised that there has been some delay due to allocation of resources to the working draft regulatory framework. However, a project manager who has experience in Vocational Education and Training sector will be commencing in the coming weeks. The TWRRP team will provide a more detailed update at the April SAP meeting. <p>ACTION ITEM 14.4</p> <p>TWRRP team to include an update on operator training in next SAP meeting agenda.</p>

Agenda item	Outcomes
12	<p>Next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft reg framework 31 March followed by webinars in April. • It was noted that that SAP secretariat role would change to Sonya Cochrane from April 2022. The Panel expressed their thanks to Glen Colley for his contributions in the role. Glen will support Sonya as she takes on the new role. • The next SAP Meeting is 27 April 2022, which will include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TWRRP evaluation framework update (presentation by Aither) ○ regional collaboration pilots update ○ draft regulatory framework feedback update ○ operator training. - The NSW Water Directorate noted that it is looking at having an 'in person' meeting on Thursday 5 May.

Actions arising from 23 March 2022 meeting

Table 3. Summary of actions.

Item no.	Action	Responsibility	Due date
14.1	Talk to Graham Kennett about possible inclusion of Rouse Water in WaterNSW catchment pilot	Glen Colley	27 April 2022
14.2	The TWRRP team will update the draft regulatory framework to note that while the Panel and other consultation groups collaborated to design the draft regulatory framework, the document is not endorsed by those groups.	Erin Cini	31 March 2022
14.3	Provide a briefing on secure yield/water security and planning work being undertaken by the department at the May SAP meeting	Director Water Utilities	25 May 2022
14.4	Include an update on operator training in next SAP meeting agenda.	TWRRP team	20 April 2022

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