

Committee name	Hunter Water Customer and Community Advisory Group (CCAG)
Date and time	Tuesday 26 September 2023 9.30am
Location	Hunter Water Head Office (and via MS Teams)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cr Brian Adamthwaite	Lake Macquarie City Council (Chair)
Cr Dr Elizabeth Adamczyk	City of Newcastle
Mr David Beans	
Ms Linda Bowden	Save the Williams River Coalition
Ms Kerindy Clarke	
Mayor John Connors	Dungog Shire Council
Cr Peter Francis	Port Stephens Council
A/Prof Troy Gaston	University of Newcastle
Ms Jean McGarry	Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhoods Alliance

APOLOGIES

Ms Sue Johns	National Seniors Association
Mr Bill Lennox & Mr Graham Jones	Maitland Masonic Hall
Mr Leroy Wilkinson	
Mr Douglas McCloskey	Public Interest Advocacy Centre
Mr Glenn Lyons	Hunter Local Land Services

IN ATTENDANCE

Darren Cleary	Managing Director
Declan Clausen	Executive Officer (CCAG Secretary)
Emma Berry	Executive Manager, Strategy & Engagement
Daniel Turnbull	Dam Safety Engineer
Rob Main	A/Group Manager Planning & Engineering
James Willing	Team Leader Sustainability and Climate Change
Chris White	A/Team Leader External Communications

WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.30am, and provided an Acknowledgment of Country.

Apologies were received and noted.

OVERVIEW OF AGENDA AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil conflicts of interest were declared.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The August 2023 meeting minutes were adopted as a true and correct record of the meeting (Moved: Ms Bowden, Seconded: Ms McGarry)

GUEST PRESENTATION – HUNTER RIVER ESTURARY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Ms Catherine Pepper – Manager Environment and Sustainability, Maitland City Council Ms Deanne Nelson-Pritchard, Principal Estuary Officer, Maitland City Council

The CCAG welcomed Ms Pepper and Ms Nelson-Pritchard, who introduced the Hunter River Estuary Coastal Management Plan - a joint program being developed by Maitland, Cessnock, Port Stephens, Dungog and Newcastle Councils, with Hunter Water and the NSW Government.

The Hunter River Estuary represents the largest coastal catchment in NSW. It has been assessed as being in poor health, currently ranked 160 of 160th in NSW.

The Estuary is of international importance, home to internationally significant shore birds and wetlands, of significant cultural and economic significance, and rapidly urbanising as part of a growing Hunter region.

The CMP is currently at the end of Stage 1, which outlines specific projects to improve the Estuary. Stage 2 research is underway, including work to consider the impact of introduced carp, a habitat mapping program, and aligning catchment management DCP controls.

Ms Pepper and Ms Nelson-Pritchard shared a video regarding the Hunter Estuary Alliance (HEAL). This is available online at: <u>https://www.hunterestuary.nsw.gov.au</u>

Members asked questions about the next steps, including the business case development, and opportunities for the community to get involved in integrated water management.

Members raised similar domestic and international estuaries, including work to improve the ecological health of the Tamar Estuary in Launceston.

Members raised the need for a central coordination authority. Cr Dr Adamczyk raised the advocacy City of Newcastle had commenced to the relevant state ministers.

Members raised recent reviews of biodiversity conservation legislation, and how to align the CMP with the outcomes of the Henry Review. Members suggested the need to ground truth habitat mapping being undertaken as part of the project.

Members thanked Ms Pepper and Ms Nelson-Pritchard. A copy of their presentation is attached.

HUNTER RIVER ESTUARY WASTEWATER MASTERPLAN

Mr David Derkenne, Group Manager Sustainability and Waterways Members welcomed Mr Derkenne back to the CCAG.

Following the presentation from the HEAL Alliance, Mr Derkenne provided an update on significant strategic work previously shared with the CCAG regarding the Hunter River Estuary Wastewater Masterplan.

The Masterplan is being developed in alignment with the Coastal Management Plan, and Hunter Water is part of the HEAL Alliance.

The goal of the project is to develop a long-term strategic direction for the five wastewater systems that discharge into the Hunter River Estuary.

The program includes exploring opportunities to increase recycled water use and collaborating with stakeholders to improve Estuary management.

Members asked about recycled water and the Lower Hunter Water Security Plan.

Action: it was agreed that a 2024 meeting will be held offsite at the Mayfield Advanced Recycled Water Plant

A copy of Mr Derkenne's presentation is **attached**.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY – ESG MATERIALITY ASSESSMENT

Mr James Willing, Team Leader Sustainability and Climate Change Ms Jackie Spiteri, Managing Director, Sustainable ESG

At the CCAG's August 2023 meeting, members received an update on Hunter Water's Sustainability Strategy.

To inform the renewal of the Sustainability Strategy, Hunter Water has engaged Sustainability ESG to undertake an ESG Materiality Assessment with key internal and external stakeholders, including the CCAG.

Ms Jackie Spiteri, and her colleague Sanzana from Sustainability ESG, guided with CCAG through a materiality assessment workshop.

A copy of Mr Willing's introductory slides are **attached** to these minutes.

Next steps: the insights from the CCAG and other stakeholders with be aggregated, with both qualitative and quantitative data. This will enable a materiality matrix to be developed. Further updates will be provided to the CCAG as the program progresses.

LOWER HUNTER WATER SECURITY PLAN: GLENNIES-LOSTOCK PROJECT UPDATE

Mr Nick Bates, Program Lead – Paterson River Scheme Ms Jennifer Pritchard, Senior Community Engagement Advisor

Ms Emma Berry, Executive Manager Strategy & Engagement introduced the Glennies-Lostock Project, as one of the actions agreed in the Lower Hunter Water Security Plan (2022), and previously in the Greater Hunter Regional Water Strategy (2014) and State Infrastructure Strategy (2018).

Ms Berry introduced Mr Bates and Mr Pritchard, who detailed Hunter Water's component of the

broader Glennies-Lostock Project, which is being led by the NSW Government, with some funding from the Australian Government. Hunter Water's efforts are focused on potential offtake and water treatment plant locations, should the scheme progress.

Mr Bates updated members on the engagement and analysis work Hunter Water has been undertaking to understand possible offtake sites on the Paterson River. This included detailed bathometric and technical analysis, alongside community engagement.

Members raised questions regarding the potential impact on irrigators from the tidal pool. Mr Cleary clarified that the premise of the investigations is that overall water security is improved for all water users.

Members questioned the opportunity to include pumped hydro within the scheme. Mr Bates advised that this is being considered by the NSW Government as part of the broader project.

Hunter Water has participated in all community engagement sessions, alongside representatives from the NSW Government's Department of Planning and Environment – Water Group, and Water NSW.

A copy of Mr Bates and Ms Pritchard's presentation is **attached**.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Ms Bowden submitted a series of questions on notice immediately before the meeting, including on the Belmont Desalination Plant, current recycled water statistics, water conservation efforts, and feedback on community information regarding the Chichester Dam Safety Review.

Action: Each of these were discussed at a high level, and it was agreed that more detailed responses would be provided with the agenda documents for the CCAG's next meeting.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil items of General Business.

MEETING CLOSE

The Chair acknowledged that the September meeting was the CCAG's last scheduled meeting of 2023. He thanked all members for their participation and contributions, and noted that there has been substantially more discussion in 2023.

The CCAG will reconvene in early 2024.

Meeting close at 11.50am

HUNTER ESTUARY ALLIANCE

BRINGING LIFE TO THE ESTUARY.

Hunter Estuary CMP Hunter Water CCAG

September 2023

Proudly supported by: City of Newcastle Port Stephens Council Maitland City Council Cessnock City Council Dungog Shire Council Hunter Water NSW Government

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Hunter Estuary and its catchments.

The Councils of Maitland, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Dungog and Cessnock, Hunter Water and Hunter Local Land Services, pay respect to all Aboriginal Elders, past, present and future with a spiritual connection to these lands.

Our Councils recognise the vast knowledge the Traditional Owners can provide to the management of the Hunter Estuary and thank them for their support in the development of the coastal management program.



Proudly supported by: City of Newcastle | Port Stephens Council | Maitland City Council Cessnock City Council | Dungog Shire Council | Hunter Water | NSW Government

The Hunter Estuary

https://www.hunterestuary.nsw.gov.au/

EAL | Hunter Estuary Alliance roudly supported by: City of Newcastle | Port Stephens Council | Maitland City Council essnock City Council | Dungog Shire Council | Hunter Water | NSW Government



The Hunter Estuary



Culturally significant to Australia's first people



Home to internationally important shorebirds, wetlands and estuarine ecosystems



Area of significant rapid urban growth





HEAL | Hunter Estuary Alliance Proudly supported by: City of Newcastle | Port Stephens Council | Maitland City Council Cessnock City Council | Dungog Shire Council | Hunter Water | NSW Government

The Hunter Estuary



One of the Largest coastal catchment in NSW @ 22,000 square kilometres Estuary passes through 5 LGAs Highly modified catchment and waterway



Overall water quality rank for estuaries in NSW is 124/160 Estuary water quality and waterway health are strongly influenced by catchment flows and incoming water quality



Proudly supported by: City of Newcastle | Port Stephens Council | Maitland City Council Cessnock City Council | Dungog Shire Council | Hunter Water | NSW Government

Pressures on the Hunter Estuary

Source: OEH 2017



HEAL | Hunter Estuary Alliance Proudly supported by: City of Newcas Cessnock City Council | Dungog Shire

Coastal Management Program

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH: STAKEHOLDERS WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE CHANGE

- Coastal Management Act 2016 requires an updated Coastal Management Program to replace the Hunter Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plan certified in 2018
- The process of developing and implementing a Coastal Management Program (CMP) is an important strategic opportunity for Councils and public authorities to work together in an 'Estuary Alliance' to achieve shared objectives.
- Whilst many groups are making a number of changes and advances in management of their areas, the estuary needs a united approach to create change to system health.
- In partnership we will overcome key constraints to coordinated, effective and sustainable management of the Hunter River estuary for the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the community both now, and into the future.



Proudly supported by: City of Newcastle | Port Stephens Council | Maitland City Council Cessnock City Council | Dungog Shire Council | Hunter Water | NSW Government

Community values

Councils, Hunter Water and other public authorities have collected a rich database of community values relating to the estuary through various stakeholder engagement processes.

The CMP process will update and refine the database as the project progresses.

This will help us prioritise investment in actions that improve the health of the estuary for the benefit of the community.

ESTVARY HEALTH	HEALTHY LIFESTYLE	PRODU(TIVITY
Water Quality	Liveability	Jobs and Growth
Connectivity	Resilience	Resilience
Biodiversity / Habitat / Shorebirds	Community knowledge & understanding	Heritage
Wetlands	Recreation	Fisheries /Aquaculture
Resilience	Community Access	Creative and beautiful cities- urban design and liveability
Ecological Health	Amenity / scenic quality	Economy activated
Protecting and increasing native vegetation	Nature/Green Spaces	Tourism
Flow	Community	Flood mitigation
Healthy Riverbanks	Flood planning & emergency response	Agriculture
Significant species	Indigenous Culture	Water extraction- drinking / Port and associated industry / Research base

HEAL | Hunter Estuary Alliance

Proudly supported by: City of Newcastle | Port Stephens Council | Maitland City Council Cessnock City Council | Dungog Shire Council | Hunter Water | NSW Government

Stage 1 Findings

- Governance of the Hunter Estuary is fragmented
- The Hunter Estuary is considered to the be the worst water quality health in the Mid Estuary reach (Maitland) and 124/160 for the Lower (Newcastle).
- The natural meandering of the river is problematic due to the proximity of population establishment.
- Realisation of climate change impacts such as sea level rise, more extreme weather patterns and changed rainfall timing has the potential to impact our lower vulnerable areas, urban populations, agricultural areas and our already threatened habitat.
- The degradation of the river through past vegetation removal and landuse has seen much of the river be subjected to erosion, loss of land, sediment slugs within the river, nutrient increases in the water and loss of habitat.





Research for Stage 2



- Business case for lead project group for the management of the Hunter
 Estuary
- Map of inundation and impacts to the Hunter Estuary catchment from predicted climate change.
- Habitat mapping, prioritisation of rehabilitation projects particularly informed by climate change data
- Sub-catchment evaluation of water quality and prioritising actions for those catchments that will provide greatest water quality benefit to the estuary
- Evaluation of risk from carp and impact of current carp management plans
- Catchment review for prioritised streambank erosion and user education
- Alignment of catchment management controls across all Hunter Estuary
 Coastal Councils
- Socio Economic analysis to inform the values of the estuary



HEAL | Hunter Estuary Alliance Proudly supported by: City of Newcastle | Port Stephens Council | Maitland City Council Cessnock City Council | Dungog Shire Council | Hunter Water | NSW Government

How can you help

- Seek to involve your stakeholder group in the development of the coastal management program
- Sign up to the "Keep Informed" section of <u>www.hunterestuary.nsw.gov.au</u>
- Participate in feedback opportunities as they arise





HEAL | Hunter Estuary Alliance Proudly supported by: City of Newcastle | Port Stephens Council | Maitland City Council Cessnock City Council | Dungog Shire Council | Hunter Water | NSW Government

HUNTER ESTUARY ALLIANCE

BRINGING LIFE TO THE ESTUARY.

Proudly supported by: City of Newcastle Port Stephens Council Maitland City Council Cessnock City Council Dungog Shire Council Hunter Water NSW Government



Hunter River Estuary Wastewater Masterplan

26 Sep 2023

David Derkenne – Group Manager Sustainability & Waterways









Hunter River Estuary





Goals and objectives

HREWM

Develop the long-term strategic direction for the five wastewater systems discharge into the Hunter River Estuary.

HUNTER WATER'S VISION

Water is life. We are creating a sustainable water future for all

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Reduce impact on waterways

Improve community liveability

Increase circular economy

Be a valued contributor to our stakeholders





The challenge

The Estuary is highly stressed, and pressures are increasing.

Water quality is impacted by a range of stressors. Institutional arrangements and regulation for catchment and waterway management hinder integrated, outcomes-based decision making

Our operations are impacting on water quality. Servicing growth using a business-as-usual approach to wastewater management is projected to increase algal concentrations in the freshwater zone by 20% by 2050.

Expectations are increasing:

- Calls for more liveable and cooler cities and healthy waterways
- Increasing demands for recycled water in a hotter and drier climate
- Community expectations for environmental protection.





Assessment framework





HREWM Objectives

LEGEND:

OutcomesOutcomesachieved withinachieved workingour operationswith others

• We will reduce the ecological health impacts of our operations over time, prioritising investments in We will facilitate opportunities to maximise use of Increase circular areas of highest influence. recycled water for water security, waterway health or Protect and restore economy local economic benefits in industry and agriculture. waterways • We will work with others to improve Estuary health. We will work with partners and agencies to identify catchment improvement works to offset impacts and restore ecosystem health. • We will maintain existing effluent flows to Swamp Support the local Creek (or alternate means) to support security of We will work with others to identify opportunities for economy supply to existing downstream water extractors. catchment improvement works to improve Improve community community liveability liveability We will explore opportunities to increase public access to waterways via Hunter Water's land holdings • We will invest in science to close knowledge gaps and • We will work with regulators and agencies to improve management and investment decisions. Build knowledge Enabling regulatory facilitate an outcomes-based, adaptive regulatory framework that is aligned to customer and • We will share information with partners and agencies environment community aspirations



Exploring opportunities to increase recycled water use





Working with stakeholders and landowners to deliver catchment and amenity improvements works



The Congewai and Quorrobolong Catchment Improvement Program

A trial project developed in conjunction with the EPA. Delivered in partnership with HLLS and local landowners

- Riparian zone planting
- Erosion works
- Fencing and off-stream watering



The old fence has been removed.



The new fence has been installed further back from the creek bank to allow for a buffer.Natural recruitment of native species has already begun.





Collaborating with stakeholders to improve Estuary management





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COORDINATING EFFORTS TO HELP HEAL THE HUNTER RIVER ESTUARY

The Hunter Estuary Alliance, made up of key agencies, met for the first time to inspect the estuary from Newcastle to Morpeth to understand the good, bad and potential of the tidal part of the river.

The next step is developing the Hunter Estuary Coastal Management Program, which will guide the Alliance's work to help heal the Hunter River Estuary.

The group is led by Maitland City Council, with representation on the day from <u>City of Newcastle, Australia</u>, Cessnock City Council, Port Stephens Council, Dungog Shire Council, Hunter Water, Hunter Local Land Services, Greater Cities Commission and Department of Planning and Environment.



CO You and 47 others

1 comment • 5 shares



Thank you



Sustainability Strategy

CCAG



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Hunter Water acknowledges the Traditional Countries of the Awabakal, Geawegal, Darkinjung, Wonnarua and Worimi peoples on which we operate and the Countries beyond where our water flows.

We recognise and respect the cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection to the lands and waters of our Traditional Custodians and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.





Our current Sustainability Strategy

- From our customers, we are expected to;
 - Enhance the liveability of our region
 - Respond to climate change challenges
 - Minimise impacts to the environment
 - Recycle more wastewater
 - Support economic wellbeing

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Our current Sustainability Strategy

Key initiatives;

- Love water grants
- Embedding sustainability in our decision making
- Improve catchment management outcomes
- Improve biodiversity outcomes
- Increase use of renewable energy
- Reduce water leakage from the network
- Reducing our greenhouse gas emissions

Hunter Water Sustainability Strategy

Reve Water



Recent achievements

Hunter Water Sustainability Strategy

S Care

Our Net Zero journey

• GHG emissions down 11% from 2005 (~72k tonnes as at June 2023)

Water conservation

- 10.9% reduction in potable water consumption as at June 2023 (12 month rolling average)
- Water loss (litres/connection/day) is 79 litres (down from 104L in 2015/16)



Drivers to refresh

- Recently launched the Miromaliko Baato Corporate Strategy
 - Sustainability a key feature
- Sustainability is only becoming more important to us...
 - Growing community expectations
 - Growing shareholder expectations
 - Increased transparency and disclosure requirements (for example TCFD)
 - Forthcoming Taskforce for Nature Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) expectations
- Playing our role in a growing region





HUNTER WATER



Drivers to refresh

• Sustainability matters will continue to impact our operations and our region...

July was world's hottest month on record, climate scientists confirm

Global average temperature exceeded previous record by substantial margin



Firefighter battles blaze in Posada, Sardinia. Wildfires raged across Europe throughout July. Photograph: Emanuele Perrone/Getty Images

Sydney's drinking water quality under threat from climate crisis, report finds

Exclusive: Audit says substantial effort to reduce emissions and limit climate change impacts needed to ensure catchment health 6 Follow our Australia news live blog for latest updates 6 Get our morning and afternoon news emails, free app or daily news podcast







, The Australian

CBA tightens screw on oil and gas lending

Australia's biggest lender, Commonwealth Bank, will no longer provide any project financing to new or expanded oil and gas extraction...

Mewcastle Herald

Oceanex says planning for a Newcastle-based offshore wind manufacturing facility must start immediately

The clock is already ticking on the need to start work on a Newcastle-based offshore wind turbine manufacturing facility in order to...

OD ABC

Research shows climate risk to global food production

United Nations World Food Program's Cindy McCain says Pacific Islands are being affected by climate change which impacts the ability to grow...

NH Newcastle Herald

MCi Carbon's mineral carbonation demonstration plant will be built at Orica's Kooragang manufacturing plant

MCi carbon was recently awarded a National Banksia Sustainability Award in recognition of its work to decarbonise global...







What will consultation involve?

- We're asking our communities and stakeholders... what is important to you?
 - Not just CCAG. Also our civic stakeholders, business to business customers, our workforce and our First Nations representatives.
- We do this via a Materiality Assessment workshop
 - A 45-50 minute session where we ask questions on a range of sustainability issues that relate to our operations
- When?
 - The next CCAG in September





How will the materiality assessment

inform the strategy?

- Your insights will be one of a range of important inputs that will define the sustainability issues, challenges and opportunities that Hunter Water will focus on through to 2030
- We'll be setting goals and developing programs of work that address these issues
- The issues, goals and programs of work (at a high level) will form the sustainability strategy



Questions?



Lostock Dam to Glennies Creek Dam Pipeline & Paterson River Scheme

Project Briefing for Customer & Community Advisory Group

26 September 2023





- Background
- Lostock Dam to Glennies Creek Dam Pipeline (L2G)
- Paterson River Offtake (PRO)
- Q&A and discussion





Benefits of the plan

The proposed program of actions included in the Lower Hunter Water Security Plan work together to:

- Make the most of what we've got
- Ensure we can reliably meet the water needs of a growing community
- Improve drought securit
- Increase the diversity and resilience of the system
- Provide an affordable approach to achieving a sustainable and resilient water supply.



Department of Planning and Environment

Lower Hunter Water Security Plan

April 2022





L2G Objectives

- Connect high yielding area of Lostock to large storage in Glennies Creek
- Improve the reliability of water for users of both storages and reduce demand from Glenbawn Dam
- Improve drought resilience by allowing transfer to critical locations in drought





Paterson River Offtake

- Key benefit is access to storage in Glennies Creek Dam during drought
- Up to 50 ML/d capacity from the Paterson River to supply drinking water into the Hunter Water network
- Three main components: raw water pump station, water treatment plant and pipeline connecting to Hunter Water network





Current Project Scope

- Water Infrastructure NSW and Hunter Water have partnered to develop a final business case
- Builds on the analysis of options from the strategic business case to produce a more comprehensive analysis
- Partners are investigating a range of engineering, environmental, cultural heritage, economic and other technical factors, as well as continuing community and stakeholder engagement

Lostock Dam to Glennies Creek Dam Pipeline Project final business case timeline



2022			2023				2024				
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Preliminary r	Preliminary modelling, assessments and investigations to inform final bu										
			Concept design development and initial environmental assessments								
										1	
							Final business case submitted				
Ongoing consultations with stakeholders and the community											

* Timeframes are subject to change.

Paterson River Offtake investigation areas









Raw Water Pump Station

- Investigation area narrowed down to two sites
- Site 1 and 2 short-listed





Water Treatment Plant

- Seven sites within investigation area
- Final business case will identify a reference site





water Major engagement activities

HUNTER

WATER





Public information and awareness events

- Dec 2022
- May 2023 (Tocal Field Days)
- Aug 2023
- Oct 2023 (planned)









- Paterson River Offtake sites
- Water Treatment Plant Site
- Pipeline to Maitland, including water pump stations and new reservoir









Engagement with water users / irrigators

- Regulated water users (Hunter Valley Water Users Group AGM)
- Unregulated water users
- Tidal pool (unregulated) water users
- General irrigators



Q&A and discussion