



MEETING MINUTES

Committee name	Hunter Water Customer and Community Advisory Group (CCAG)
Date and time	Tuesday 28 June 2023 9.30am-12noon
Location	Burwood Beach Wastewater Treatment Works

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cr Brian Adamthwaite	Lake Macquarie City Council (Chair)
Cr Peter Francis	Port Stephens Council
Mr Adam Bowcutt	Maitland Masonic Hall
Cr Sally Halliday	Maitland City Council
Ms Jean McGarry	Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhoods Alliance
Cr Karen Jackson	Cessnock City Council
Ms Sue Johns	National Seniors Association
Cr Jessica Clark	Dungog Shire Council

APOLOGIES

Mr Bill Lennox	Maitland Masonic Hall (represented by Mr Adam Bowcutt)
Ms Linda Bowden	Save the Williams River Coalition
Cr Dr Elizabeth Adamczyk	City of Newcastle
A/Prof Troy Gaston	University of Newcastle
Ms Thea Bray and Mr Douglas McCloskey	Public Interest Advocacy Centre
Mr David Beins	
Mayor John Connors	Dungog Shire Council (represented by Cr Jessica Clark)

IN ATTENDANCE

Darren Cleary	Managing Director
Declan Clausen	Executive Officer (CCAG Secretary)
Rahul Chhillar	Group Manager Information Controls and Energy
Dr Clare Hogue	Program Lead Customer Research & Insight
Chris White	Team Leader External Communications

WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.31am, and provided an Acknowledgment of Country.

Apologies were received and noted.

Mr Adam Bowcutt and Cr Jessica Clark were welcomed to the meeting, respectively representing the Maitland Masonic Hall and Dungog Shire Council.

OVERVIEW OF AGENDA AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil conflicts of interest were declared.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The February 2023 meeting minutes were adopted as a true and correct record of the meeting (M: Cr Francis, S: Cr Halliday)

MANAGING DIRECTORS REPORT

Mr Darren Cleary

Mr Cleary presented the Managing Director's report to the CCAG, which included:

- Water storages update: dam storage are currently high, however following several wet years, the BoM is forecasting the return of an El Nino cycle. El Nino typically results in dry summers, which put significant pressure on Hunter Water's storages. Water conservation remains critical.
- Corporate scorecard: Hunter Water continues to perform well against its targets for the 2022-23 year. Changing methodology for measuring corporate reputation by introducing a new online survey. Reduction in Non-Revenue Water below target, as a result of several large breaks within recent months. Safety index (TRIFR) an important metric in monitoring the safety of the workforce, alongside safety culture metric. Profit lower than budget, primarily due to wet weather conditions.
- Pricing update, including pass through of CPI on 1 July 2023, and increases to Hunter Water's customer support and hardship programs. Members queried the applicability of CPI to Hunter Water's business and discussed the regulatory model.
- Hunter Water expanding customer hardship communications to ensure the community is aware of the support that is available. Increasing level of uptake demonstrates hardship experienced by some in the Hunter.
- Expansion of the Payment Assistance Scheme (PAS) to include small business customers for the first time.
- Dam Safety investigations: Hunter Water undertaking 15-yearly assessments of both Chichester and Grahamstown Dam. Assessments consider how the Dams respond to a variety of rare and very rare events. Draft assessments have been lodged with the Dams Safety Regulator, with Hunter Water's consultants and a Dam Safety Expert Panel currently finalising the reports. Hunter Water anticipates these to be lodged with the Regulator and publicly released later in the year.
- Members questioned Hunter Water's processes for daily, monthly and annual dam inspections, including walking along the dam embankments and looking for wet spots and seepage. Mr Cleary discussed the use of new technology including considering historic geological land formations, and more contemporary understandings of earthquakes. These new insights provide additional perspectives on the way the dams would respond to rare and very rare events.
- Seaham Weir Pool: adoption and implementation of the Seaham Weir Pool Erosion Management Plan. Hunter Water working with Transport for NSW, Dungog and Port Stephens Councils, and Local Land Services.
- Lower Hunter Water Security Plan implementation: including Belmont Desalination and Glennies-Lostock investigations.
- New Community Engagement Procedures, which replace previous Operating Licence Requirements. Hunter Water committed to maintaining a CCAG.

Mr Cleary's presentation is available on the CCAG website.

GENERAL BUSINESS & QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Following discussion in the MD report, members raised pricing notification, including notification to real estate agents.

Mr Cleary explained proactive notification underway (including direct mail, eBilling, advertising and media). Management took on notice the question regarding notification of real estate agents, including how to best engage on Smart Water Choices and other ways for tenants to conserve water.

Nil Questions on Notice had been submitted.

Due to a meeting in Sydney, Mr Cleary and Mr Clausen left the meeting.

STRATEGIC PRESENTATIONS: CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR PRICING PROPOSAL

Dr Clare Hogue

Dr Hogue provided an update to the CCAG on Hunter Water's pricing proposal. New prices will apply for the 5-year period commencing 1 July 2025.

Phase 2 community engagement including a bill simulation survey, a prioritisation survey, a series of focus groups and Hunter Water's quarterly community survey. Approximately 6,000 customers participated in the engagement.

Dr Hogue's presentation is available on the CCAG website.

SITE TOUR: BURWOOD BEACH WASTEWATER TREATMENT WORKS



Rahul Chhillar

Burwood Beach is Hunter Water's largest Wastewater Treatment Works, treating the wastewater generated by the Newcastle City, Dudley, Charlestown, Jesmond, Mayfield and Carrington areas. The Plant treats 48 million litres of wastewater every day, supporting a population of 220,000 people.

Mr Chhillar led the CCAG on a tour of the WWTW site.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 15 August 2023

MEETING CLOSE

11.30am