



MEETING MINUTES

Committee Name:	Customer and Community Advisory Group (CCAG)
Venue:	Hybrid meeting In Person: Hunter Water Board Room, 36 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle West Online: Via MS Teams
Date and Time:	Tuesday 13 September 2022 9.30am – 12noon

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cr Brian Adamthwaite	Lake Macquarie City Council (Chair)
Cr Dr Elizabeth Adamczyk	City of Newcastle
Mr David Beins	
Mayor John Connors	Dungog Shire Council
Mr Ken Edwards	Alternate delegate for Save the Williams River Coalition
Cr Peter Francis	Port Stephens Council
Cr Karen Jackson	Cessnock City Council
Mr Bill Lennox	Maitland Masonic Hall
Mr Douglas McCloskey	Alternate delegate for Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC)
Ms Jean McGarry	Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhoods Alliance

APOLOGIES

Ms Linda Bowden	Save the Williams River Coalition (represented by Mr Ken Edwards)
Mr Glenn Lyons	Hunter Local Land Services
Ms Thea Bray	PIAC (represented by Mr Douglas McCloskey)
Cr Sally Halliday	Maitland City Council
Ms Sue Johns	National Seniors Association

IN ATTENDANCE

Darren Cleary	Managing Director
Emma Berry	Executive Manager Strategy and Engagement
David Derkenne	Group Manager Sustainable Wastewater

Lisa Warren	Senior HR Partner- Diversity and Inclusion
Tahleigha Powell	HR Officer
Declan Clausen	Executive Officer (CCAG Secretary)

WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.37am, and noted the apologies.

Alternate members Ken Edwards and Douglas McCloskey were welcomed to the meeting.

CCAG CHARTER

The Group noted the paper on the CCAG Charter and resolved to support the extension of the current CCAG Charter in an unmodified format until 1 July 2023.

AGENDA OVERVIEW AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No Conflicts of Interest were declared.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The June 2022 CCAG meeting minutes were adopted by the CCAG as a true and correct record of the meetings.

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- Water storage update: storages are currently full, and likely to remain full given weather outlook
- Corporate Scorecard and performance update – including recent performance against trust and water conservation scores, safety (lead and lag indicators), and profitability metrics
- New partnership with Lake Macquarie City Council to provide recycled water for sporting fields
- Cost of living challenges, including increase in Hunter Water's Pension Rebate and hardship support schemes
- Cottage Creek naturalisation and partnership with the Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC). Work underway on naturalisation in other areas, including with Cessnock City Council.

A copy of the Managing Director's presentation is **attached**.

Members asked questions of the CCAG regarding existing water use for irrigation, and about leakage and non-revenue water.

REGULATORY UPDATE

Mr Darren Cleary and Ms Emma Berry presented the regulatory update. This included:

- Discussion on the reintroduction of developer chargers for Sydney Water and Hunter Water, and upcoming public exhibition
- Hunter Water's new Operating Licence

- IPART's Form of Regulation Review
- Role of the CCAG in Hunter Water's regulatory processes
- Commencement of customer and community engagement, including listening posts.

A copy of the presentation provided is **attached**.

INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Lisa Warren, Senior HR Partner – Diversity and Inclusion, and Tahleigha Powell, HR Officer

Ms Warren and Ms Powell presented on Hunter Water's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The Reconciliation Action Plan is our promise to move to a place of equity, justice and partnership together. This RAP reflects Hunter Water's commitment to create improved economic, health and social outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Innovate RAP builds on achievements since Hunter Water adopted its first RAP in 2019. New initiatives in the Innovate RAP include an Indigenous Engagement Plan, development of a Cultural Learning Strategy and Indigenous Procurement Policy.

Ms Warren briefed the CCAG on partnerships including the Clontarf Foundation supporting First Nations students at Newcastle, Hunter River, Irrawang and Toronto High Schools, and the work on the 'Where's Our Water?' book.

Members were complementary of the work undertaken, and asked to be kept updated on Hunter Water's RAP journey.

Members asked questions regarding Hunter Water's employment targets, and noted that the Port Stephens Lions of the Year is a Clontarf Foundation Alumni.

A copy of the presentation is **attached**, including links to the two videos shown during the discussion.

HUNTER RIVER ESTUARY WASTEWATER MASTERPLAN

Mr Dave Derkenne, Group Manager Sustainable Wastewater

Mr Derkenne presented on Hunter Water's Hunter River Estuary Wastewater Masterplan, including the challenges and opportunities posed by environmental change and development growth in the Hunter River catchment.

Mr Derkenne explained that a quarter of all Hunter Water customers live in catchment areas where treated wastewater is discharged to the Hunter River, and this number is growing. 60% of all population growth within the region is forecast to occur within these catchments.

Mr Derkenne discussed the partnership approach being undertaken with local councils, including to support the development of a joint Coastal Management Plan for the estuary.

Members asked questions about how they could support disseminating information publicly, on the health of the estuary, the impact of Hunter Water's operations during dry periods, and the role of treated wastewater in providing baseflow in creeks and rivers.

The group discussed the Paxton Catchment Improvement Program, and how the project helped reduce costs to Hunter Water and its customers, while delivering improved environmental outcomes.

A copy of the presentation is **attached**.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE AND GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil questions on notice were placed on the agenda.

Several items of general business were raised by members, including:

- A question regarding the possible provision of backlog sewer services to North Rothbury. In response, Hunter Water shared a copy of a letter recently sent to Cessnock City Council providing an update on current regulation and decision making around future schemes.
- Groundwater / paleochannel opportunities. In response, Ms Berry provided an update on exploratory bore work undertaken to date. Noting the CCAG's interest, it was agreed that Hunter Water would provide further updates to the group.
- Regulation of onsite wastewater systems. Mr Derkenne responded advising onsite wastewater systems are principally regulated by local councils.
- Stone Ridge Quarry, and impact on the Balickera Canal and Grahamstown Dam. This project is currently being considered by the Department of Planning and Environment. In June 2020, the Department issued Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs). These requirements included several water related conditions, including "*an assessment of the likely impacts of the development on aquifers, watercourses, riparian land, water-related infrastructure, the Grahamstown Dam drinking water catchment, Balickera Channel, Balickera Tunnel and any other related infrastructure, and other water users*". Hunter Water will continue to monitor this project, including providing advice to the consent authority under the *Hunter Water Act* and *Hunter Water Regulation*. Further information on the planning assessment is available on the DPE website:
<https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/stone-ridge-quarry-project>

MEETING CLOSE

Meeting closed 11.50am

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes were approved by the CCAG on 7 December 2022.