Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan
Stakeholder Advisory Group
Minutes

Meeting No. 9, 22 May 2025, 10:45 – 3:45 pm

Chardonnay Lodge, Coonawarra

Objectives

- Revisit guiding principles for the revised Plan to finalise draft.
- Provide an update on progress of groundwater modelling and discuss uncertainty analysis within the current models.
- Work through an acceptable impact approach for stock and domestic.

Attendees:

Group Attendees – Penny Schulz (Chair), Pete Bissell (Chair), Alan Rossouw, Belinda Williamson (MS Teams), Claire Harding, Claire Davies, Darren Shelden, Graeme Hamilton, Kerry DeGaris, Kylie Boston (MS Teams), Melissa Herpich, Peter Balnaves, Simon Sherriff, Terry Buckley, Wayne Hancock.

LC Landscape Board Staff Attendees – Liz Perkins, Sue Botting, Chelsea Burns, Ryan Judd.

Department for Environment and Water (DEW) – Cameron Wood (MS Teams), Virginia Riches (MS Teams).

Apologies –Nil

Welcome and agenda

The Chairs welcomed everyone and thanked Group members and staff for their attendance and gave an acknowledgement of country.

Agenda check and minutes

Minutes from Meeting 8 amendments:

- On page 4 there were some discussion notes under the stock and domestic section that relate to the First Nations consumptive pool. These should be moved to the First Nations consumptive pool section.
- Query raised in relation to the cost prohibitive comment in relation to drains. Sentence to be reworded to be about understanding cost versus benefit.
- The Group briefly discussed drainage infrastructure projects for wetland restoration and what projects are underway or going ahead.
- Spelling error on page 6.

Other business:

- Query on action 3.5 and whether this had been done. Action 3.5 is not complete.

With amendments, minutes from Meeting 8 were confirmed as true and correct.

Moved by: Graeme Hamilton Seconded by: Terry Buckley. All were in favour.

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Guiding principles

Liz Perkins facilitated a discussion on the draft guiding principles for the Plan. This included feedback from the LC Landscape Governing Board for Group consideration as circulated to Group members following deferment of the item at Meeting 8.

Discussion:

- The Group discussed the difference between guiding principles and objectives. Guiding principles are the foundational intent for the revised Plan but not necessarily measurable. They are therefore not as specific. Objectives will sit under these that will need to be measurable.
- The Group discussed the purpose of the principles. The intent is, when finalised, they will be in the revised Plan. But they are also for use by the Group to consider when developing revisions. Principles are a guide for how the plan should work, they need to be useful as a principle.
- Query was raised as to whether First Nations need their own principle if they are included within other principles.
- It was discussed whether there could be different equity principles for each consumptive pool.
- It was discussed that there are elements repeated in multiple principles and whether this could sit overarching the principles to simplify them.
- It was also discussed whether some principles could be merged (e.g. quality and quantity). As these are only draft, there will be an opportunity to merge later but could leave separate for now.
- How will sustainability be defined (e.g. long term sustainability). Is this quantity, quality or both?
- Given the significant difference between forestry and irrigated agriculture it is a struggle to see how the potential mechanisms being discussed can be equitable.
- General agreeance that equity needs to be in the principles as its own principle but try to keep it simple. Need to consider how other people will understand what is meant by equity or read it in the plan? Defining equity for this context is challenging and can be contentious.
- The Group discussed some language around the distribution/sharing of the benefits and burdens of sustainably managing the groundwater resource. Action for LC Landscape Board staff to reword an equity principle and bring back the group.
- The Group discussed whether the economic importance of the resource was adequately reflected in the principles. Action for LC Landscape Board to consider a principle around economic use.
- Group discussed whether they could confirm agreement on any principles so that we don't continue to revisit, noting that there may be some minor tweaking. No agreement was reached.
- The Group discussed concerns that wording of the principles could be subject to interpretation and open up the revised Plan to perverse outcomes. It was discussed that there are different levels of rule setting underneath the principles that will define what is or isn't possible.

Uncertainty analysis – groundwater modelling

Liz Perkins provided an introduction for Dr Cameron Wood and Virginia Riches (DEW) to present on uncertainty analysis in the current LLC groundwater models in response to feedback received and discussed at Meeting 8.

Discussion:

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- The Group briefly discussed the opportunities for further scenario runs. There is intent to run further scenarios but we need to work through the questions we want to answer using the scenarios. It was acknowledged that the scenarios 1 and 2 are book end scenarios of best and worst case which are run as part of model development.
- Some model scenarios will depend on future climate scenarios and climate projections/modelling. The climate projections used are the latest available.
- The Group discussed the timescale of data inputs and how they are investigated and scaled (e.g. are they daily for rainfall).

Acceptable impact: stock and domestic

Liz Perkins provided an overview an approach for determining acceptable impact for stock and domestic.

Discussion:

- Stock and domestic wells being considered are only those installed since 1995. The Group discussed this cutoff date. Having a cut off date is a mechanism to exclude wells that have reached end of useful life and provides a higher quality of data to support the approach. How this is communicated and explained will be important.
- The Group discussed a range of changes and developments that have happened in the stock and domestic space. This included the introduction of polypipe coming in and how this changed how people approached stock and domestic bores and then how they distributed water around their properties. It also included how domestic use (e.g. the size of modern gardens) has changed and water use on rural living blocks has expanded. It also included how individuals/businesses approach putting bores down differently in terms of the depth they might put there bore to. There is a lot of difference in well drillers in relation to how deep they recommend a bore should go.
- The Limestone Coast Regional Plan draft is currently being consulted on and needs to be considered. Many agencies are providing feedback on this plan and in particular, around the sections where water resources are considered.
- It was queried whether stock and domestic bores could be separated in analysis. Essentially there is no meaningful way to distinguish between these uses in the data. Many people may use a bore for both stock and their home.
- The Group discussed changing the wording around the vulnerability assessments and the impact rating. Wording like catastrophic is emotive and something else should be considered.
- The Group discussed the vulnerability categories recommending to simplify and have less: 1-4 m, 4-8 and greater than 8 m.
- The cut off of 2021 was queried. This aligns with when the groundwater model was completed, it projects from 2021.
- Small landholders around bigger urban centres were discussed by the group and how township boundaries are set within plans. It was raised that changes have meant that blocks at 1,800 m^2 will be required to have own wastewater and a bore. This is domestic use.
- It was queried whether water allocation plans need a section about their interaction with other legislation such as Planning and Development. Water allocation plans are required to identify their interaction with other legislation and policies.

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Acceptable impact: stock and domestic and the groundwater models

Cameron Wood presented on a proposed approach to acceptable impact for stock and domestic.

Discussion:

- The timeframes of when the impacts happen are also important. Will the impact (stock and domestic bores going dry) happen quickly in the next 10 years or more slowly over a 30 year period.
- Understand historical loss is interesting as there does seem to be acceptance of what has happened in the past.
- Deepening a bore will have a different economic cost depending on depth of groundwater. Significantly more costly if deeper groundwater.

Other business

- Some group members asked whether the LC Landscape Board wanted other commodity groups to provide their own guiding principles as forestry have. The LC Landscape Board is not requesting other commodity groups do this, that is a decision for each commodity group.
- The adaptive management guiding principle within the forestry guiding principles was discussed. It was open to different interpretations by members, some that were not the intent.
- The Border Groundwater Agreement was discussed in relation to how it impacts policy setting in the revised plan and if there is any appetite from the states for change to the Agreement
- The Group queried and discussed how feedback should be provided, as an example like the forestry guiding principles or by another mechanism. The LC Landscape Board welcomes open communication of concerns and feedback and written is accepted.
- The Group discussed how to further discussion around forestry and adaptive management. Some Group members felt there was a need for the Group to better understand existing forestry legislation and principles. Forestry are still working to understand data and potential impacts.
- The Group discussed how to better inform licence holders of resource condition. Is a viable mechanism to include something with water licence invoices? The system generating these invoices doesn't support that, but the LC Landscape Board is able to send information out to licence holders separate to DEW invoicing. Action for the LC Landscape Board to consider implementing this during the amendment process.
- The timeline of the process was discussed and the stress it puts on industries and the community. Some members indicated they would like the process to be sped up by the LC Landscape Board. Action for LC Landscape Board to update the amendment process timeline for the Group.

Next meeting date

- Next meeting date: Meeting 10 scheduled for Thursday 17 July 2025.

Close of meeting

Meeting closed at 3.45 pm
The Chair thanked the stakeholders and staff for attending.

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Lower Limestone Coast WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group
Action Table

Action	LLC WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Actions	Status	Meeting 9 Update
1.1	LC Landscape Board to provide the Group updates on outcomes from the Limestone Coast Water Steering Committee.	Ongoing	
3.1	LC Landscape Board to analyse potential amalgamations and provide back to the Group.	Ongoing	
3.3	Revisit management zones as adaptive management and sustainable allocation are considered.	Ongoing	
3.4	Understand the impact of SPR and DS if class 3 and 4 were merged to look at moving forward with 3 classes as a starting point.	Ongoing	
3.5	Allocation and use data to be presented spatially in addition to the table.	Ongoing	
4.1	Run two scenarios: full allocation extracted with RCP4.5 climate change scenario and current average extraction with RCP4.5 climate change scenario.	Ongoing	
5.2	Organise for the Group to meet with the South East Aboriginal Focus Group.	Ongoing	
6.2	LC Landscape Board to added glossary of terms on project page.	Ongoing	
8.1	LC Landscape Board staff to provide some examples of reductions vs restrictions using same example – do a one pager example.	Ongoing	
9.1	LC Landscape Board staff to reword an equity principle and bring back the group.	Meeting 10	
9.2	LC Landscape Board to consider a principle around economic use.	Meeting 10	
9.3	LC Landscape Board to consider implementing resource condition updates during the amendment process.	Ongoing	
9.4	LC Landscape Board to update the amendment process timeline.	Meeting 10	

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Action Table – Closed Items

Action	LLC WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Actions	Status
1.2	LC Landscape Board staff to take the option of proxies in the terms of reference to the LC Landscape Board Governing Body.	Complete
1.3	LC Landscape Board staff to provide an overview of the monitoring network at Meeting 2.	Complete
3.2	Move forward with same management zones as current for now.	Complete
5.1	Revisit guiding principles for the Plan in Meeting 6.	Complete
2.2	Provide the Group terms of reference for Limestone Coast Water Steering Committee	Complete
2.1	Request from Group for extraction and allocation for each management area + holding licences info.	Complete
5.3	Have a session on the drains to provide members more information.	Complete
6.0	Pull out key concepts slide and provide on members project page.	Complete
6.1	LC Landscape Board to send out dates for meetings for the first 6 months of 2025.	Complete
6.3	LC Landscape Board to query DEW about providing IMAT table to the Group.	Complete

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