

# Padthaway WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Minutes

Meeting No. 5, Thursday 12 March 2020, 2:00 – 4:00 pm  
Farmer's Leap, 41 Hodgsons Road, Padthaway, SA 5271

## Objectives

- Overview of the requirements and process for reviewing a Water Allocation Plan.
- Unbundling discussion.
- Groundwater level resource condition limits discussion.
- Licensee salinity monitoring project.

## Attendees:

**Group Attendees** – Kerry DeGaris (Group Chair, SE NRM Board), Scott Longbottom, Tim Hoare, Krysteen McElroy, Carolyn Brown, John Summers, Phil Brown.

**Staff Attendees** – Sue Botting (Team Leader, Water Policy and Planning, NRSE), Ryan Judd (Senior Project Officer, Water Policy and Planning, NRSE).

**Apology** – David Williamson (Team Leader, Water Licencing).

## Welcome and agenda

The Chair welcomed everyone and discussed the proposed agenda. Thanked advisory group members and staff for their attendance.

## Minutes

Previous minutes from meeting 4 confirmed as true and correct subject to correction of Action List table heading (refers to Tatiara).

## Action outcomes to note

- Action 2.6 – On-going.
- Action 3.6 – On-going.  
Suggested wording: “Warnings” and “Actions”
- Action 3.7 – On-going.
- Action 3.8 – Completed. Presented in Meeting 4.
- Action 3.9 – Completed. Presented in Meeting 4.
- Action 4.1 – Completed.
- Action 4.2 – Completed.
- Action 4.3 – Completed.
- Action 4.4 – On-going.
- Action 4.5 – On-going.
- Action 4.6 – Completed.

Decisions made by the group at meeting 4 and recorded in the Decision Register were confirmed by the group.

**ACTION:** Decision Register to be updated with reference to salinity modelling limitations as a key consideration in the decision to not have an RCT or RCL for salinity.

## WAP review process

Sue Botting presented an overview of the requirements and process for reviewing a Water Allocation Plan.

### Key Points:

- A comprehensive review of the WAP is required to review the principles, assess if the plan requires amendments and address other matters as required.
- Project governance includes:
  - Stakeholder Advisory Group.
  - South East Water Planning Project Team: SE NRM staff and representatives from different DEW teams (Licensing, Water Planning and Security, Science and Aboriginal Engagement), to provide advice on review process and amendments to ensure draft Plan meets departmental requirements, facilitating the approvals and implementation process.
  - DEW Water Steering Committee: High level departmental group to oversee resourcing and issues affecting Water Allocation Plan reviews across the state.
  - SE NRM Board.
- Consultation with community and stakeholders. Ryan is working with the SE NRM Community Engagement Coordinator to develop a community engagement plan. They will consult with the Group at a later date for input and advice.
- Review and assessment of WAP to date includes: Upper South East Water Allocation Planning Review, reviewing the WAP principles with the SAG and update of modelling and running of scenarios.
- DEW have developed draft guidelines for reviewing WAPs that require a risk assessment to be completed to determine need and extent of review. While the requirement may not be applied retrospectively SE NRM will consider incorporating a risk assessment as another tool to identify principles for review, and to be consistent with the guidelines.
- Other matters to be considered include: unbundling, consumptive pools, adaptive management (use of resource condition triggers and limits), an update of the socio-economic status of the PWA re groundwater needs and Aboriginal cultural values. Ryan is working with SE NRM's Aboriginal Engagement Officer and a Working Group (representatives from the SE Aboriginal Focus Group) to further develop how cultural values may be integrated into the WAP.
- A process of consultation and approvals follows on from the Group's review, assessment and proposed amendments, as below:
  - Community engagement (non-statutory).
  - SAG /SENRM review community feedback and prepare draft WAP for SENRM Board.
  - SENRM Board seek CSO advice and recommend draft WAP for Ministerial approval.
  - Department reviews draft WAP.
  - Minister approves draft WAP for formal community consultation.
  - Formal community consultation (60 days).
  - SAG /SENRM review community feedback and finalise WAP for SENRM Board.
  - SENRM Board approve finalised WAP for Ministerial approval.
  - Minister approves finalised WAP for implementation.
  - WAP is implemented, usually from the start of a financial year.
- The Group noted the process and requirements for the WAP review.

## Unbundling

The Department was unable to provide someone to present on unbundling at this meeting but, with sufficient notice, a DEW staff member with experience in unbundling groundwater should be able to present at the next meeting.

To help inform that presentation the Group discussed their concerns and questions regarding unbundling:

- Do we have to have an unbundled plan?
- Can we guide or alter unbundling to suit Padthaway?
- What is the risk to allocation being altered each year?
- There appears to be more risk than benefit with unbundling.
- It needs to be explained how unbundling will benefit licensees.
- Only benefit noted is that water entitlement is preserved as an asset and adaptive management reductions, as defined by the plan, apply only to the allocation.
- There have been two reductions in Padthaway, after the last reduction the community raised that they need to ensure they do not lose any further water entitlement.
- The WAP needs to be written to ensure allocations are not altered annually.
- Is there a risk to market value by altering the share in the resource?
- The River Murray is not seen as a good example of unbundling and does not suit the Padthaway region.
- What is the risk to having state wide cuts implemented?
- Working through examples of how unbundling applies to Padthaway licencees (eg what would be the volume allocated per share) would be helpful in understanding how unbundling works and the implications for licensees.

**ACTION:** Summary of Group discussion, concerns and questions to be forwarded to DEW staff member to inform unbundling presentation.

**ACTION:** Examples of how unbundling applies to Padthaway licences to be prepared for the next meeting.

## Resource condition triggers / Resource condition limits

Ryan Judd discussed some options for setting and implementing a resource condition limit (RCL) and triggers (RCT) for groundwater levels.

Discussion:

- There needs to be a reasonable amount of wells monitored to ensure that the RCT/RCL monitoring is robust and representative and this should be included in the Plan.
- Saturated thickness was raised as an alternative measure for the RCL. There was some concern that it wasn't as easily understood as groundwater level. The feasibility of its use as a measure across the entire Padthaway area was also questioned.
- Average extraction is generally about 70% of allocation so any reductions may not result in a real reduction in water usage. Should carry-over be reduced first?
- Need to consider time required to implement reductions. There was concern that allocations may not be received in a timely manner making it difficult to plan the season ahead. This is due to delays with users reporting their water usage. Notification of data should be no later than December.

- SB advised that when discussed with the South East Water Planning Project Team the proposed timeframe of five years was considered too long to implement adaptive management and was not supported. The Group agreed to work through an alternative four year timeframe as presented by Ryan.
- The RCL/RCT graphs presented included summer data. Graphs with only winter data would be easier to read and interpret.
- The Group requested that an RCL proposition be worked through to get an understanding of what percentage of wells in each management area exceeded the RCT / RCL each year, and what reductions would be needed to recover the resource condition.

**ACTION:** Request advice from Cameron Wood on the use of saturated thickness as an RCL measure and how it varies across the Padthaway area.

**ACTION:** Forward presentation of RCL and RCT graphs to the Group amended with only winter observation wells' readings included.

**ACTION:** Prepare examples of the application of the proposed RCL/RCTs to past data and future modelled scenarios, the percentage of well exceedances for each management area, and projections for the recovery of the resource.

### Licensee salinity monitoring project

Ryan Judd advised the Group that the Citizen Science licensee salinity monitoring program was to commence in the next few weeks.

Discussion:

- Sampling bottles will be mailed out to licensees with instructions on how to collect a sample.
- Samples may be left at Padthaway or Naracoorte for collection by Ryan. Samples will then be sent to Adelaide for testing.
- The results will be processed and published through the Department's WaterConnect database, and emailed to the licensee.
- The Group advised that many people were unlikely to participate as they would not want their data to be published to protect business reputations. If confidentiality of data could be maintained licensees would be more likely to participate.

**ACTION:** Further investigate options for managing commercial-in-confidence data.

### Next steps

- Unbundling discussion.
- Groundwater level resource condition limit application.

### Next meeting date

- Next meeting date: Tuesday 28 April 2020 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm.

### Close of meeting

Meeting closed at 4:30 pm.

The Chair thanked the stakeholders and staff for attending.

**Padthaway WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group**  
**Action Table**

| <b>Action</b> | <b>Padthaway WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Actions</b>                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Status</b> | <b>Meeting 5 Update</b> |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 2.6           | Prepare and distribute to the Group an explanation / example of the application of the three year rolling average SPR carry-over.                                                                                       | On-going      | Held open               |
| 3.6           | Consider alternative wording to “Resource Condition Triggers”.                                                                                                                                                          | On-going      | Held open               |
| 3.7           | Consult with DEW re feasibility of providing more tailored water quality and level data and trends directly to licensees.                                                                                               | On-going      | Held open               |
| 4.4           | Investigate suggested alternatives for groundwater level resource condition triggers and limits.                                                                                                                        | On-going      | Held open               |
| 4.5           | Consult with relevant DEW teams to review annual reporting to better inform licensees of Padthaway salinity and groundwater levels and trends.                                                                          | On-going      | Held open               |
| 5.1           | Decision Register to be updated with reference to salinity modelling limitations as a key consideration in the decision to not have an RCT or RCL for salinity.                                                         |               |                         |
| 5.2           | Examples of how unbundling applies to Padthaway licences to be prepared for the next meeting.                                                                                                                           |               |                         |
| 5.3           | Request advice from Cameron Wood on the use of saturated thickness as an RCL measure and how it varies across the Padthaway area.                                                                                       |               |                         |
| 5.4           | Forward presentation of RCL and RCT graphs to the Group amended with only winter observation wells’ readings included.                                                                                                  |               |                         |
| 5.5           | Prepare examples of the application of the proposed RCL/RCTs to past data and future modelled scenarios, the percentage of well exceedances for each management area, and projections for the recovery of the resource. |               |                         |
| 5.6           | Further investigate options for managing commercial-in-confidence data.                                                                                                                                                 |               |                         |

**Action Table – Closed Items**

| <b>Action</b> | <b>Padthaway WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Actions</b>                                                                                                             | <b>Status</b> |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1.1           | Amend Terms of Reference                                                                                                                                            | Complete      |
| 1.2           | Unbundling presentation for meeting 2                                                                                                                               | Complete      |
| 1.3           | Forward both Daniela and Cameron's meeting 1 presentations to SAG members                                                                                           | Complete      |
| 2.1           | Forward unbundling presentation to the Group                                                                                                                        | Complete      |
| 2.2           | Confirm requested information regarding delivery supplements and the current sustainable limit and allocations                                                      | Complete      |
| 2.3           | Available water extraction, rainfall and salinity data for the last ten years to be compiled and forwarded to the group                                             | Complete      |
| 2.4           | Forward presentation on the current Padthaway Water Allocation Plan to the Group.                                                                                   | Complete      |
| 2.5           | Confirm requested information regarding transfers, carry-overs and divided allotments.                                                                              | Complete      |
| 2.7           | Terms of Reference to be amended, as discussed, and distributed to the Group.                                                                                       | Complete      |
| 3.1           | Forward Groundwater Modelling and Resource Condition Limits (RCLs) presentation to the Group.                                                                       | Complete      |
| 3.2           | Further information on flow from the ranges to the flats to be provided.                                                                                            | Complete      |
| 3.3           | Further information required on modelled salinity output confidence levels, with respect to landuse and spatial patterns, and potential areas to improve the model. | Complete      |
| 3.4           | Contact PIRSA (Mel Fraser) to investigate current or potential soil salinity monitoring projects of relevance.                                                      | Complete      |
| 3.5           | Scenarios to be run for average extraction, full allocation and reduced rainfall.                                                                                   | Complete      |
| 3.8           | Confirm requested information for RCT and RCL discussion.                                                                                                           | Complete      |
| 3.9           | Ryan to present further information on the Citizen Science salinity monitoring project.                                                                             | Complete      |
| 4.1           | Forward updated salinity modelling and groundwater modelling scenarios presentation to the Group.                                                                   | Complete      |
| 4.2           | Forward heat mapping and other information to the Group.                                                                                                            | Complete      |
| 4.3           | Licencing to check that if DS has been returned that Total Allocation has also been reduced, and to confirm the current Total Allocation volume.                    | Complete      |
| 4.6           | Forward salinity monitoring project presentation to the group.                                                                                                      | Complete      |

**Padthaway WAP Review 2019/20**  
**Decision Register**

| <b>Issue</b>                                                             | <b>Meeting</b> | <b>Decision</b>                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Terms of Reference                                                       | 3              | Group agreed to adopt the Terms of Reference                                                          |
| Guiding principles for WAP review                                        |                |                                                                                                       |
| Resource Condition Triggers and the concept of Resource Condition Limits | 4              | Group agreed to have no RCT or RCL for salinity                                                       |
|                                                                          | 4              | Group agreed to having an RCL for maintaining throughflow of groundwater from the Ranges to the Flats |
|                                                                          | 4              | Group agreed to having an RCT and an RCL for groundwater levels                                       |
| Timeline for Resource Condition Triggers and Resource Condition Limits   | 5              | Group agreed to the proposed timeline for responses to resource condition triggers and limits         |