

## LOWER DARLING STAKEHOLDER MEETING TELECONFERENCE 04 January 2018

### MINUTES/ACTIONS

**Attendance:** Rachel Strachan, Katherine McBride, Alan Whyte, Andrew Wall, Brendan Barry, David Dawes, John Coffey (Essential Water), Matt Parmater (CL&W – Town Water Supply)

**WaterNSW:** Vince Kelly, Jeff Finch, Dan Berry

**Apologies:** Tim Ellstone, Adrian Langdon, Andrew Garrett (CL&W)

### UPDATE ON LAKES

- Upstream flows:
  - Walgett 0 ML/d
  - Brewarrina ~20 ML/d - steady
  
  - Bourke – ~60 ML/d - steady
  - Louth – ~70 ML/d – falling
  - Tilpa – ~90 ML/d – falling
  - Wilcannia – ~100 ML/d – steady

### Storage totals:

- TOTAL STORAGE VOLUME – 429 GL - this is a reduction of 67 GL since the teleconference on 7 December 2017.
  - 480 GL was reached 15 December 2017
    - 307 GL in Wetherell + Pamamaroo
    - 172 GL in Menindee + Cawndilla
- Wetherell – 70 GL – 34%
- Pamamaroo – 220 GL – 86%
- TOTAL – 290 GL in top two storages – Active ~265 GL
- Menindee – 12 GL
- Cawndilla – 128 GL – 13%

### Releases:

- Releases from Wetherell ceased on 1 November as the storage is now below 59.8m AHD. At this level water is no longer on the floodplain of Wetherell.
- Pamamaroo Outlet – 280 ML/day
- Menindee Outlet – 0 ML/day – ceased 15 November, storage now too low for releases to be made.
- Weir 32 target ~ 200 ML/day – in accordance with the WaterNSW operations plan.
- Releases from Cawndilla – currently 620 ML/day – outlet capacity is now a concern.
- Since 7 December release totals have been: Cawndilla 16.4 GL; Menindee 0 GL; Weatherell 0 GL; Pamamaroo 9.6 GL; Total 26 GL. Flow over Weir 32 – 8.9 GL.

### Downstream flows:

- Weir 32 - ~225 ML/d
- Pooncarie – ~ 115 ML/d
- Burtundy – ~ 80 ML/d
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## FORECAST

- 2 scenarios – Base case; and Drought provided
- Key results:
  - Pumping to Copi forecast to commence mid-August 2018
  - Pumping from Tandure forecast to commence mid-March 2018
    - Model assumes that Tandure pumping will occur when the combined Wetherell-Tandure storage reaches approximately 50 GL. At this time, Wetherell storage as a storage cell is approximately 25 GL. The model then assumes that pumping will continue to occur and maintain Wetherell at 25 GL or the highest level possible, thereby reducing surface area for the volume stored.
  - Cease to Lower Darling release forecast mid December 2018
  - Broken Hill supply – to mid September 2019.

## DISCUSSION

- It was noted that the SDL proposal that has now been presented to Min Co has a proposed NSW reserve of 80 GL. The current storage of 70 GL in Wetherell is a representation of future operating practices and the circumstances that users in the Lower Darling could be facing in future years under the SDL proposal.
- Question raised as to whether pumping arrangements for Copi Hollow are in place.
  - Not to date, this need to be addressed in a project plan for implementation of the drought measures highlighted in the operations plan. This is applicable to all measures not just Copi and needs to be addressed to provide confidence and understanding for community of when these actions could be implemented.
- Uncertainty remains regarding the arrangement for private diversions from Copi Hollow if drought measures are implemented
  - This has been included as an action from the last teleconference and will be addressed prior to the next monthly discussion.
- Current river status observations
  - Some slugs of algae moving through the system so water quality for domestic use is inconsistent. The pH has dropped over the past month reducing the amount of acid being used. Latest BGA report shows algae are present throughout the system but predominately non-toxic varieties.
- Clarification of current flow target was sort. Current operations are targeting 200 ML/day at Weir 32, with a minimum of not less than 20 ML/day at Burtundy. In the event that the Weir 32 target is insufficient to meet this requirement, additional releases shall be made. Past experience provides that a flow of 80 ML/day at Pooncarrie is a point where cease to flow at Brutundy is likely.

## COMMUNICATION

- Commitment remains to present operations plan to customers and community in the coming weeks.
  - Invitation to CL&W and all agencies, including Commonwealth representation, should be provided to ensure that all issues can be addressed in any face to face meeting. It is a difficult situation for WaterNSW as many of the issue that customers and community wish to raise are not the responsibility of WaterNSW.

- A key question for short term management of the Lower Darling is the management of small flow event in the Barwon Darling.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **ACTIONS ARISING FROM DISCUSSION**

- Assess ability to provide notification to community and customers regarding the water quality in the lower Darling and the issues this may present.
  - 2 gauging stations to be upgraded to include measurement and reporting of pH in the new year.
- Further consideration be given to the use of releases from Cawndilla
  - Did not receive support from CLaW or MDBA, but the door is ajar to discuss the institutional arrangement that are limiting the use of Cawndilla to deliver water to the Murray. The group agreed that this should be pursued to ensure future opportunities are not missed.
- Identify a location for block bank upstream of Pooncarrie in the event of cease to flow for lower Darling
  - Some analysis, but no site selected, we are working on a timeframe for when this site will be needed
- Provide a copy of the draft operations plan for the Lower Darling to the group
  - Minster has approved and document is now available on the WaterNSW website – link to be emailed to all Lower Darling customers.
- Investigate the opportunity to have a workshop of landholders and industry experts to help with the understanding and management of water quality issues.
- Provide bi-weekly updates of forecast system management.
- Andrew Garrett to follow up on the creation of a report resulting from Mr Laurie visiting the area, and whether this will be available publically.
- Clarification of model dates for pumping to Tandure and the intent for longer term management of Weatherell/Tandure - pump to channel capacity? – Complete 4/1/18
- Policy position required for supply to customers from Copi Hollow – post implementation of pumping to Copi Hollow.
- Timing of block bank implementation to be included with monthly modelling results

### **NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 1 February 2018, 1-2pm (teleconference)