

Details

Meeting: Healthy Floodplains Review Committee

Location: Teleconference

Date/time: Tuesday 13 October 2020
9.04 am – 10.13 am

Chairperson: [REDACTED]

Apologies

[REDACTED] – Manager Floodplain Harvesting, NRAR (minutes)

[REDACTED] - Senior Water Regulatory Officer, NRAR

[REDACTED] Senior Water Regulatory Officer, NRAR

Attendees

Committee:

1. [REDACTED], Independent Chair of the Healthy Floodplains Review Committee
2. [REDACTED], NSW Farmers Association representative, landholder from the Caroon area of the Liverpool Plains (apologies for being late)
3. [REDACTED], NSW Nature Conservation Council representative and landholder Mudgee
4. [REDACTED], NSW Irrigators Council representative, Local Irrigator and landholder, Moree

DPIE – Water Healthy Floodplains:

5. [REDACTED], Director Healthy Floodplains
6. [REDACTED], Manager Licencing Healthy Floodplains Project, DPIE
7. [REDACTED], Senior Project Officer, DPIE
8. [REDACTED], Senior Project Officer, DPIE
9. [REDACTED], Project Officer, DPIE (minutes)

Consultants:

10. [REDACTED] - Alluvium Consulting Pty Ltd

This meeting

No.	Issue	Action	Responsible	Date due
1	Welcome and confirmation of agenda.	██████ welcomed all and noted attendance / apologies.	Chair	
2	Declaring conflict of interests.	Nil declared.	Chair	
3	Adoption of minutes dated 15 September 2020.	██████ moved ██████ seconded.		
4	Adoption of minutes dated 22 September 2020.	██████ moved ██████ seconded.		
5	Adoption of minutes dated 6 October 2020.	██████ moved ██████ seconded.		

6	<p>Presentation by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] - floodplain harvesting modelling valley comparisons.</p>	<p>The Border and Gwydir has similar modelling with minor differences on how the reservoirs are considered. In Border River how water is released across state boundaries is dictated in the Water Sharing plans rules, particularly in the upper catchment reservoirs. The Gwydir doesn't have the same issue, as wholly in NSW.</p> <p>Both models have multi use of data: remote sensing, IBQ, NRAR, and updated with submission process.</p> <p>The developed model approach can be used for the Macquarie and Namoi. The Barwon may be different as there is more unregulated access. The Barwon has natural lagoons with multi properties intersecting, however the Barwon will be able to draw on approach that modellers undertook for the Border Rivers.</p> <p>The upper Namoi has a lot of unregulated take and water flow across the Pilliga, however it will be interesting to see if there is a difference in model. There has been a small amount of unregulated take, mainly local runoff, however it is best to look at the larger scale unregulated take. Needs to be documented clearly.</p> <p>[REDACTED] – will localised gauges assist with rainfall runoff assessment?</p> <p>[REDACTED] – If gauges are available at the farm scale or multi farm scale they will be used. The key thing to review is the multiple lines of evidence to establish the model.</p> <p>[REDACTED] – When will the model build reports be available for viewing?</p> <p>[REDACTED] – When will the Gwydir be available?</p> <p>[REDACTED] – Border Rivers reports were published on the 6th November and formal submission period commencing 20th November. Gwydir expected</p>	
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approximately by the end of January 2021.

█████ asked █████ how the meeting with the environmental stakeholders go?

█████ – Meeting went well except maintaining their position particularly as rainfall runoff was altered.

█████ - There was a significant lack of data informing the decision which is why it was changed. With the multiple lines of evidence used, the model is OK technically.

█████ - There needs to a better understanding, the reports were not available to review, then changed, prefer a conservative approach. At the end of the process the rainfall runoff data was changed.

█████ - It is part of the department's adaptive management approach. The licencing regime will give pathway for any future change, which is separate to the committee process. Whilst understand the concerns, published journal articles were used to underpin the decisions made.

█████ – Based on published scientific journals and review, in all cases the model was found to be too low. The rainfall runoff change was small from 7 to 8.5% across the whole Gwydir valley.

█████ - Is it available to all land holders in Boggabilla?

█████ - Yes slightly justified and increased. The irrigation industry wanted more however the DPIE modellers approach had better consistency. The lines of evidence were applied. The floodplain runoff was not as high as the submissions, and it was a small component being less of the overall less than 1% of the total water take in the valley. DPIE's position is defensible.

Losses between farm and gauge. There are losses between, wetting of channels, soil absorption and spreading of flood water (transmission loss). In the end the farm : river loss was not greater than what was expected. The modellers are looking at the farm balance and comparing against gauges to see if it makes sense and therefore if the water balance makes sense.

■■■■ - The long-term historical use data needs to be used as available. The modelling is an iterative process, it looks at the process of calibration, then the submission challenges the modelling calibration. The model is tested, and adjustments made if necessary. The final model is then published with supporting documents.

■■■■ - The paucity of gauge data is the issue.

■■■■ - The process will be improved over time with better data. The Commonwealth Government has committed to \$35 billion dollars to implement gauging to better inform water management. ■■■■ can provide further information on the program if required. Trading of shares is possible but within the plan limits. The Water Sharing Plan is reviewed every 5 years and can be altered. Both the government and industry can provide data to fill the information gaps, based on research and development and published literature.

■■■■ - How is environmental assessment occurring for works that did not need prior approval?

■■■■ - An NRAR factsheet is currently being prepared which will be published. NRAR has sent out the Border Rivers WSWA applications. Once returned NRAR will commence the environmental assessment.

No.	Issue	Action	Responsible	Date due
		<p>████ - Were unapproved works were included in the model?</p> <p>████ - Yes used in model if they met the 3 criteria for eligible works in the Floodplain Harvesting Policy. Where WSWA works are not approved by NRAR, they may need to be modified or decommissioned. The landholder then has the option of trading their floodplain harvesting rights.</p> <p>████ - It seems that the environmental considerations are last.</p> <p>████ requested that both the notes from the industry meeting and the environmental meeting be circulated to the committee.</p> <p>As █████ missed part of the meeting, he can contact █████ if he requires any further modelling information.</p> <p>Thanks to █████ for his attendance.</p>		
7	Review of floodplain harvesting submissions Submission # G009 (returning issue 3).	Committee unable to determine as NRAR not present to provide information to support strong evidence. Deferred to out of session meeting.		
8	Submission #G006 █████	Committee unable to determine as legal advice was not available. Deferred to out of session meeting.		
9	Other business			
10	Meeting Close		Chair	

Meeting closed

10.13am

Next meeting

Out of session meeting 14 October 2020