

McLaren Vale Water Allocation Plan

Advisory Committee

Meeting 1, Friday 13 August, 2:00pm-4:30pm

Location: McLaren Vale Visitor Centre

Members: Janet Klein (Chair), Joch Bosworth, Robert Brokenshire, Chris Dundon (on Teams), Amanda Hirschhausen, Jennifer Lynch, Gavin Malone, Brad Moyes, Chris West, Jenny Woodley

Landscape Board/DEW: Tom Mowbray (H&F, executive officer), Martin Stokes (Green Adelaide), Wendy Telfer (H&F), Steve Barnett (DEW Science).

Minutes

Presentation slides provided as ATTACHMENT 1

1. Opening

Janet opened the meeting, welcoming everyone, acknowledging Country, and providing opening remarks on the WAPAC.

Members introduced themselves – there is a great cross-section with Robert, Joch, Martin and Jenny involved in previous WAP development / review.

2. WAPAC Role

Discussion of Terms of Reference: functions and objectives.

What will make it a great WAPAC?

- Be a conduit of information to the community.
- Consider local, First nations and scientific knowledge.
- Build on the strong foundation of previous WAP development and review processes, and the strong ownership of the WAP by this community.
- Make it clear what we can and can't influence.
- H&F to keep giving us information (don't have big gaps / lags in providing information)
- Provide information with enough time for members to read it and think about it, and allow time in the agenda for questions about the information provided.
- Celebrate each time we meet.
- It will be good to get a refresher on what has been happening with the resource and water use in the area.
- Come wanting to solve problems.
- Don't hold back on questions to make sure technical issues are explained clearly and are understood.

Action: Tom to prepare an email / newsletter content that Jen Lynch and Jenny Woodley and others can send out to their members informing them about the WAP review, with names of those on the Committee, and the process.

Action: Tom to talk further to Jenny Woodley about how environmental and other interests (outside of economic issues) can be included in the Water Security Plan Working Group.

Action: Members to fill in forms for remuneration.

Action: Tom to circulate a contact list so that members can discuss topics out of session as required.

3. Water Allocation Planning Outline – Tom Mowbray

Tom summarised prescribed areas, water allocation plans (WAPs), and the review and amendment process (See attached presentation slides).

4. History of water allocation planning in McLaren Vale and an outline of current WAP – Martin Stokes

- Prescription of resource in 1991 in response to local concerns about declining water levels.
- Amalgamated the northern section (top of Kangarilla area) into the prescribed resource in 1998 in recognition that it was a recharge area.
- First McLaren Vale WAP for groundwater approved in 2000. Large proportion of WAP development focus was on volumetric conversion.
- WAP set the volume to be shared as 6.6GL. There were 380 licenses and average use at that time was higher than this theoretical limit. Relatively straightforward process to transition to the new provisions and important that alternative water sources were sought to cover the gap in what water users required.
- 60% of licenses were in the Pt Willunga formation. The whole groundwater resource was across four aquifers was treated as one big bucket, and trade applications were assessed on their impact on the receiving area. Applications moving take northwards were generally approved, but moving take southwards or to the east of the Willunga fault was generally refused.
- The WAP did describe GDEs but no policies specifically relating to them.
- 2007 review of the WAP mostly retained it as is. Some changes made to the transfer rules. More detail added about the GDEs stating that if water levels are maintained GDEs will not be impacted.
- 2011 review of the WAP concluded it was not necessary to amend the WAP, but evaluation did note that when next reviewing the WAP, consideration should be given to amalgamating the MV and WMLR WAPs.

5. Discussion about the effectiveness of the plan – All

- Joch: From a user's perspective the WAP has worked quite well over the last 5 years. Users all understand the policies. It is quite straight forward and easy to understand; e.g. that each user has 1.1 ML/ha to use. Roll-over credits give you a bit of flexibility.
- Robert: The plan has been effective for two reasons: 1) there was clear decline – people accepted that they couldn't keep over-pumping the resource and the WAP was needed; 2) there were alternative water sources, and this helped ease the stress and worry over investments in the 1990s about water availability. Transfers have been available and given flexibility.
- Martin: the theoretical sustainable limit number was set at a point in time based on understanding at the time. It is not set in stone. WAP reviews need to consider what is happening with the resource and what are sustainable levels of take.
- Chris D: Need to understand whether the 1.1 ML/ha is still the right number for sustaining the resource. The policy around transfers is not as clear as it could be. Should make it clearer about how they can be used.
- Jenny: Having watched trends in my own stock & domestic well, there seems to be an issue with declining water levels. Monitoring also suggests salinity increases and in future there may come a time when this water has to be shandied. Background documents suggest declines in water levels in some areas. May need more monitoring of bores in some areas, eg. Seaford.
- Jen: MVGWTA observed mains water substation scheme project and telemetry data. Why is there such a lag in monitoring data? The data should be on-demand these days.
- Grapes tolerate certain salinities and growers do their own bore sampling and are self-regulating use of bores. S&D use may be impacted in these areas.

- Water security solutions are important to bring additional water sources online. This means that there is no strong demand for increased use of the native water resources.
- Brad: Background documents suggest may be merit in treating the different aquifers separately. I would like to understand more about how the aquifers interact. Is there a need to separate the policies for different aquifers – so that concerning trends in some are can be managed.
- Gavin: Have a Phragmites swamp of great ecological and cultural significance. Standing water rarely now in the swamp, previously flooded every year. Surface water is being captured by dams and not reaching the swamp – how is that regulated and monitored?

6. Engaging the community using a stakeholder survey? - Wendy Telfer

- Strong support for idea of early engagement.
- Important to engage not just water users and licensees, but other community members and interests.
- A survey was done for the Clare WAP by Seed Consulting – could provide useful framing for a MV WAP survey.
- It would be good to share information about the WAP process, and then have a survey that can be accessed for those interested.
- Reach out to community in multiple ways, e.g. include information on community noticeboards where people can see it; share through council websites, through groups' email distribution lists; through providing information at Vigneron Days; community news; City of Onkaparinga Facebook page.

Action: *HFLB to develop information for communication about the WAP review, WAPAC and process and a survey to understand community views on the WAP. A range of engagement tactics to be pursued to share this information and survey.*

Action: *A paper was requested on how managed aquifer recharge is working and trials.*

Action: *Information was requested about seawater intrusion and the groundwater / seawater interface, and impacts on seagrasses.*

7. Amalgamation? – Tom Mowbray / Martin Stokes

Would it be better to amalgamate this plan with the Western Mount Lofty Ranges Water Allocation Plan, or to keep the McLaren Vale Water Allocation Plan separate?

- Previously response from community/stakeholders has been "leave our plan alone".
- For MV, the groundwater and surface water resources do have basically the same boundaries.
- If the WAPs were amalgamated, unique rules for the MV aquifers can be retained in the WMLR WAP.
- General agreement that we don't want to lose the local focus and ownership of the plan. The plan works because it is relatively simple in terms of geography and administratively, and because it's owned by a cohesive community. If it is not broke, don't fix it?
- Happy to understand the pros and cons through having a paper come to the WAPAC about it. Be careful of shifting into the WMLR WAP – already that WAP is too big and sophisticated. The benefits of the MV WAP is it is easily understood.
- Would it be better to bring the MV surface water into the MV WAP, and making it a fully contained WAP for the MV area? This may be legislatively complex because of the need to change WMLR prescription. Need to investigate this idea.
- Would like to know more about the linkages between the WAP review and the Water Security Plan development.

Action: Information to be presented about the degree of connectivity and inflows between the aquifers, and between the aquifers and surface water. Committee keen to better understand the groundwater and surface water interactions.

Action: Tom and DEW to prepare a paper providing pros and cons of options around amalgamating the MV WAP with the WMLR WAP. Three options to be considered:

- Keep WAPs separate
- Combine MV and WMLR WAPs
- Combine MV groundwater and surface water policies into a single WAP (separate MV surface water policies out of the WMLR WAP)

Action: Update on the water security planning process to be provided for the WAPAC to understand the planning and progress made.

8. Review process outline – Tom Mowbray

- Process from here
- Risk assessment
- Meeting length: members are happy for the meetings to go a bit longer if required.
- Meeting dates: some not available on Friday 26 November. Might be good to bring closer to meeting 3.

Action: Tom to circulate a Doodle Poll to members to find best meeting dates.

9. General Discussion:

Discussion about Stock and Domestic bores

- Do we know where they are in the region? And how many are used? Whether they are used correctly and sealed?
- They are not metered. Do we know how much water they are drawing? Perceptions that some large volumes are drawn for watering commercial business lawns.

Action: Information was requested about what we know about use of stock and domestic bores in the region.

10. Next meeting:

Around Friday 1 October (pending Doodle poll); will consider condition of the water resource, ecological and First Nations values, potential climate change impacts, and context for the risk assessment

Tentative meeting schedule

Meeting dates are approximate pending Doodle poll on people's availability

Meeting 2 – Friday October 1	Looking Back and Risk Assessment Context
Meeting 3 – Friday October 29	Risk Assessment – Risk Identification, Risk Analysis
Meeting 4 – Friday November 19	Risk Assessment – Risk Evaluation, Risk Treatment
Meeting 5 – Friday February 4	Discussion of Draft Review