



MINUTES

WARREN BLACKWOOD ALLIANCE OF COUNCILS BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY 2 APRIL 2024, 5PM
HOST: SHIRE OF BRIDGETOWN - GREENBUSHES

Meeting opened: 5.05pm

1. Welcome

a) Acknowledgement to Country

Cr Jenny Mountford acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and paid respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

b) Attendance:

Voting:

Cr Richard Walker SOBB
Cr Helen O'Connell SOBB
Cr Tony Dean SON
Cr Jenny Mountford SOBG
Cr Sean Mahoney SOBG
Cr Donelle Buegge SOM
Cr Vivienne MacCarthy SODB
Cr Lisa Glover SODB
David Taylor SON
Ben Rose SOM

Non-voting:

Leonard Long SOBB
Katie McDonnell Executive Officer
(EO)
Mark Batty, CCAPIRG Project
Officer

Apologies for absence:

Dr Garry Hunt SODB
Cr Alexis Davy SODB
Nicole Gibbs SOBG

Cr Vicki Hansen SON
Cr Steve Miolin SOM

2. Presentation via zoom

- a) Water Corporation: Regional Water Source planning for the Warren Blackwood scheme
- Matthew Bowman – Manager Assets Investment Planning
 - Ian Bierman – Senior Project Manager Assets Delivery
 - Melissa Bromley – Senior Planner Assets
 - Clive Hampton – Manager Water Resource Science
 - Alyce Nehme – Senior Advisor Community Engagement

Warren Blackwood Scheme background:

- Historically each town relied on independent local dams.
- Now it is an integrated scheme with groundwater supplementing dams.
- In 2022, scheme was expanded to include Kirup and Mullalyup.
- Possible expansion to include Pemberton, with carting to Northcliffe and Quinninup.
- Scheme relies mostly on groundwater from the South West Yarragadee aquifer via a bore near Nannup (75%). Bore originally “back up” now main source due to decreasing inflow to dams and water quality issues.
- 25% of water come from larger local dams – Millstream Dam, Manjimup Dam and Tanjannerup Dam.

Declining inflow to dams driven by climate change

- Reduced streamflow and evaporation in dams driven by climate change

Water quality issues associated with dams

- Decreased inflow to dams can lead to undesirable water quality issues.
- Conflicting land use near dams.

Increasing water demand

- Residential and non-residential consumption increasing
- Expansion of lithium mine.
- Our current groundwater source entitlement is 1 500 ML/year. This will soon be insufficient.
- Demand is already greater than 95% of this and is forecast to exceed this in 2028/29.
- Note – public water supply reserve for groundwater is 3 000 ML/year from Yarragadee aquifer

Forecast

- By 2050 we will need another 500ML of water
- Boar capacity 10ML per day, 2050 will be 10-12ML per day
- 2050 demand: 1,822 ML/y
- Plan for source capacity: 2,100 ML/y.
- Allows for treatment losses, leakage, buffers etc.

Source Development Plan

Water Corporation submitted an updated Source Development Plan to DWER in January 2024. The future source options considered are:

- More water from existing Yarragadee bore (near Nannup). 1.5 – 1.9 GL/y subject to DWER approval.
- Small water treatment plants for Manjimup Dam and/or Millstream Dam to treat water stored there for as long as the sources are viable.
- Small borefield (two to three bores) drawing from the superficial aquifer near Manjimup.
- New Yarragadee bore at an alternative location.

Hydrogeological Assessment

- The highest level of hydrogeological assessment is required by DWER to support the application to increase Water Corporation's annual abstraction from the Yarragadee Aquifer at Nannup from 1.5 to 1.9 GL/y
- As part of this hydrogeological assessment, we performed an aquifer pumping test over 8 days to help us understand and demonstrate the impact of our proposed abstraction on the groundwater system.
- We are currently assessing the data from the production bore, and 34 groundwater monitoring bores, collected before, during, and after the test.
- The hydrogeological assessment, incorporating the pumping test results will enable DWER to make a highly informed licensing decision

What work is planned?

To ensure the reliability and quality of water supply to communities, the following priority work is in planning:

- Nannup Groundwater Treatment Plant (GWTP) & Transfer Upgrade – planned to be delivered end of 2027.
 - The treatment plant will remove iron and manganese, using salt chlorination and filtration, at the bore.
 - Reduce water loss to evaporation.
 - Supply water directly to the scheme (bypassing the dams).
- Contingency Bore - Thomas Rd Nannup – this will be delivered first.
 - A second Yarragadee bore will be drilled at Thomas Rd Nannup approx. 300m from existing bore.
 - Bores will be used alternately.
 - Drilling planned for **late 2024**.
 - Second bore does not increase our groundwater licence. The licence entitlement will be shared between the two bores.

Questions

- How are levels of the Yarragadee and is the forecasted use sustainable
 - Significant bore (400m), Warren Blackwood region is subject to decline in storage and has been since early 2000. Related to climate, water licenses, etc.

- Developed a hydrogeological assessment to review system, levels, a ground water modelling exercise, predicated usage, etc. and everything demonstrates the planned use will not add to the decline.
- Given correlation between forest management, the ground water level and the runoff which is affecting the total water supply - did Water Corporation submit to the forest management plan and what were the recommendations.
 - No, nothing was submitted to forest management plan.
 - Ground water system is complicated and Water Corporation get water from very bottom layer. It is not connected to the surface water, stream flow, runoff, etc.
 - Abstraction from the Yarragadee does not affect levels in the dams as it is not the same system.
- What is the primary source of the Yarragadee
 - The Water that Water Corporation remove is thousands of years old.

Action: Water Corporation will circulate literature around the water sourcing.

- Are there any plans to pipe water to the towns that currently have water trucked in.
 - Walpole – undertaking groundwater trial that started earlier this year. Trying to establish groundwater source. Outcomes of trail will confirm if infrastructure will be installed.
 - Northcliffe & Quinninup – for the foreseeable future the option is to truck water.
- Has there been work into desalination?
 - Currently looking into this Albany, have looked at Windy Harbour in the past.
 - Also looking at smaller plants on farms etc.
- What is the ground water availability east of Manjimup
 - Local sources are sustainable

Action: Water Corporate will circulate more information

- There is developing water deficiency in our region, does Water Corporation have any contingency plans for farmers who are running out of water in our region.
 - Water Corporation make available what they can for the purposes they need it with DPIRD & DWIR.
 - Current issues around West Arthur.
 - Water Corporation would appreciate any advance notice we can give them of areas that are going to declare water deficiency issues.

Discussion

- WBAC still don't know base line date other than gossip (i.e. farmers in Scott River have large allocations).
- Water Corporation can give an analysis of the annual allocations. Mick Irving went to Nannup 3 – 4 years ago and ran workshops and had the chart of allocations by industry then.

Action: WBAC write to Department of Water and ask for the current individual licence allocations (MG per allocation, hectares, etc) from Scott River.

Action: WBAC request from Water Corporation a breakdown of the priority allocations, distributions and usage by industry / classification, including clarification of the process for getting an allocation.

Discussion

Water deficiency in region

- Shires are receiving calls from rate payers indicating that they have water deficiencies, and they are concerned they will run out of water – agriculture, primary producers, household water with 6 week waits to be refilled.
- Boyup Brook are investigating standpipe allocations, transferring water from dam, etc.
- Cattle are consuming around 80 litres of water per day.
- Talison are taking portable water from Donnybrook for their camps.
- It was asked if there is mental health support for farmers who are having to put livestock down due to water shortages.
- Shire of Bridgetown have targeting farmers for mental health catch up.

Action: Jenny to share information of presenters for the mental health catch up.

3. Declarations of Interest

- None

4. Minutes of last meeting & matters arising

a) Minutes of meeting 04.02.2024

- i. Correspondence out includes letters to Ministers Don Punch and David Templeman regarding importance of Donnelly Mill Project.

Minutes of WBAC board meeting on 04.02.2024 are confirmed as true and correct.

Moved: Cr Jenny Mountford

Seconded: Cr Vivienne MacCarthy

Carried 10/0

b) Food & Beverage Capability Guide

A list was circulated with the agenda of the business who have already submitted information for the South West Food & Beverage Capability Guide. Each Shire is asked to contact the food and beverage businesses in their shire who are missing from the list and encouraged them to do a submission. We can not put together a Warren Blackwood Guide with the current uptake of businesses.

Action: WBAC to email all Shires the promotional emails asking people to take part.

Shires to encourage CRC's, VC's, Chambers, etc. to circulate to their contacts too.

5. **Finance**

- a) 2023 – 2024 YTD Financial Report

The WBAC year to date financial report for the current financial year is confirmed as true and correct.

Moved: Cr Vivienne MacCarthy

Seconded: Cr Donelle Buegge

Carried 10/0

6. **WBAC Tourism: Southern Forests & Valleys**

a) **SF&V Update**

A presentation update was presented by Katie McDonnell on the current work of the SF&V project. The presentation included:

- Tourism development
- Website development
- Website statistics
- Social media statistics
- Overview of July 2024 Tourism Conference
- Trails development

Update noted by all members.

b) **Great Aussie Road Trips proposal**

WBAC has been approached by the “Great Aussie Road Trips’ television producers with a proposal for SF&V to have an episode about the region in the 2024 series.

- 21-minute show, aired on Outdoor channel (26 countries) and 7+ in Australia
 - 5 – 6 days filming
 - Airs in December
- Cost \$40,000 - \$45,000 per episode
 - Includes all footage (raw and edited) being provided to us
 - \$2,200 per minute

Action: WBAC investigate all our options for TV shows and content creation.

Action: Circulate marketing plan to all members.

7. **WBAC Climate Change Action Plan Implementation Reference Group**

a) **Project Update**

- Presented to Shire of Manjimup Sustainability availability committee
- For June meeting, CCAPIRG have asked to attend.

Action: Katie ask Verge if they are happy for CCAPIRG to attend the presentation.

Update noted by all members.

b) **Minutes of meeting**

Minutes noted by all members.

c) **Talison proposal**

A draft proposal was circulate with the agenda for consideration by Talison to support our communities in the transition to an equitable low carbon future.

- 3 - year partnership totalling \$750K
 - Coordinator Role – Salary/vehicle only (oncosts met by WBAC) \$350,000
 - Fuel and Energy Audits - \$30k per Shire – bulk procurement \$150,000
 - Community devolved grants - \$50K per Shire over three years \$250,000
- There is a clear alignment with the Talison Community Investment Program, 'designed to offer substantial funding opportunities for strategic programs and projects'.

The preliminary proposal seeks:

1. Funding for a suitably qualified and full-time regional Climate Change Coordinator that will work with the WBAC, member Shires and key regional and state agency stakeholders to progress:-
 - a. The development and implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan program and identified projects
 - b. Future funding opportunities from State and Commonwealth Governments
 - c. Comprehensive audits of member Shires fuel and energy (electricity and gas) consumption, in order to prioritise bulk procurement of solutions, as appropriate.
 - The appointed coordinator will report directly to the CEO of their employing Local Government. The WBAC will fund the overhead costs for the coordinator role.
2. A devolved grant fund in partnership with the WBAC to encourage the update of residential solar power with battery storage, to build community energy resilience, with a focus on low social-economic and local government social and aged housing stock. Managed by the WBAC and sponsored by Talison.

Discussion

- Comes at a time where Talions may be looking to be involved with more social issues within the region.
- Give profile to WBAC and LG's within the community that we are doing pragmatic actions.
- Deliver on WBAC subregional growth plan, community strategic plans and shows that we are doing something on climate change.
- Demonstrates to stakeholders that we are leading climate change.
- What do Talison get:

- Solar panels with battery storage (\$250k)
- Need statement in the proposal about what they get
- Give Talison options – the current proposal and a much larger one with administration, more implementation, support from WBAC, etc.

Investigate and expand current proposal, then start partnership discussions with Talison, lead by Cr Tony Dean.

Moved: Cr Tony Dean

Seconded: Cr Donelle Buegge

Carried 10/0

d) Employment of CCAPIRG Project Officer

Current CCAPIRG Project Officer, Mark Batty, has handed in his resignation from the 30th June 2024.

- If Talison funding eventuates, the role will be undertaken by them.
- Until Talison funding is explored, we need someone to take on the role.

Action: WBAC write to CEO's with expression of interest for coordinator role.

8. Warren Blackwood Stock Route

a) WBSR Working Group

i. Minutes

Comprehensive minutes were circulated from the recent working group meeting in February.

Minutes noted by all members.

ii. Status of group

- The purpose of the group was to update and speak with all stakeholder in one meeting, the meetings are not working as DBCA are increasing negative to deal with and not following up with actions.
- WBAC need input from shires regarding maintenance and management for trail and campsites.
- DBCA need input as DBCA as land owner, road owner and campsite manager for 2 campsites.
- Ask DBCA to send one representative per district.
- Need to have WA Horse Trail Guidelines to confirm what is / is not needed.
- Next meeting hosted by Shire of Nannup.
- Have an WBAC board member as chair.

b) 2024 Route Development – financial year contributions

- As discussed at previous WBAC meeting, the WBSR required maintenance this year which total \$42,419.90 +GST

- The cost will be split equally between the three Local Government in which the WBSR transverse: the Shires of Manjimup, Bridgetown – Greenbushes and Nannup.
- The cost per Shire is \$14,139.97 +GST

Action from February WBAC meeting: Shire of Manjimup, Bridgetown – Greenbushes and Nannup to confirm if the funding will be included in 2023/24 or 2024/25 budget.

Action: Funding will be from this years budget. Katie to send invoices to each shire.

9. Warren Blackwood Strategic Review: Held 21st March 2024

a) Session Notes & Feedback

Top Themes:

1. Build the WBAC brand, i.e.:
 - Awareness and capacity
 - Shire co-branding
 - Comms out
2. Increase awareness of CCAPIRG and encourage implementation projects
3. Data collection to reflect the key elements of the WBAC constituency and economic value
 - By LGA and sub-region
4. Continued development of trails and tourism projects, including value add opportunities, and extend the current focus to include agritourism.
5. Projection of natural assets
6. Enhance advocacy of WBAC at State level.
 - 2024 WALGA conference opportunities.
7. Shared services approach
 - Policies
 - Local Law development
 - Resources
 - Training
8. Acknowledge value of Agritourism / agribusiness
 - Education to metro area to gain support and awareness of primary industries within the region.
 - Opportunity for booth a WALGA.

Actions from session:

- Each CEO was encouraged to consider the strengths and challenges on an individual and LGA organisational level
- Integrate WBAC brand into shires websites, stationery and publications, i.e. 'Shire of Nannup, part of the Warren Blackwood Alliance of Councils'.
- Do a press release for the region growth plan to target community members.

- Request copy of feasibility study by Shires of Irwin, Mingenew, and Perenjori regarding shared services.
- Need data and statistics for the region (population, industries, km's, etc.)
- Need to formalise processes to align with pivotal timelines:
 - Key projects and activities consideration prior to budget cycles
- WB Growth Plan integrated into induction for all newly elected members
- Need agreement for minute circulation.
- All Shires to have WBAC section in their council and staff induction process.
- Look into short video presentation about WBAC that can be used by WBAC, Shires, SWDC, RDA, etc.
- Identify priority projects
 - Climate change and implementation projects
 - Tourism
 - Waste Management
 - Trails, etc.
- Strong advocacy for economic development of the sub-region and key issues which fall outside funding capability:
 - Housing
 - Land availability
 - Health
 - Connectivity, etc
- Undertake advocacy:
 - Housing and liveability
 - Develop a prospectus to attract housing developer.

Action: Katie to provide all shires updated information for their individual websites, each shire to update their current page or make a new page.

b) Next steps

Action: CEO's to get together and develop an priority focused action plan.

10. 2024.25 Budget

a) Operations and future projects

- Business as usual for 2024/2025.

11. Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability (D. Taylor)

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport has commenced a new inquiry into local government sustainability.

- As part of the inquiry the Committee will examine financial sustainability and funding frameworks of local governments, alongside changing infrastructure requirements and service delivery obligations. The Committee is seeking to understand the challenges faced by local governments in servicing infrastructure requirements across regional, rural, and remote locations.
- Closing date for submissions, 3rd May 2024.

WBAC lodge a joint submission for the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability.

Moved: David Taylor

Seconded: Cr Jenny Mountford

Carried 10/0

Action: Each shire to send a copy of their submission to Katie to inform the joint submission.

12. General Business

No general business

13. Date of future meetings:

- a) Tuesday 4th June 2024, Shire of Manjimup
 - a. Presentation: Verge Earth Moving
- b) Tuesday 13th August 2024, Shire of Donnybrook Balingup (WALGA 1st week)
- c) Tuesday 1st October 2024, Shire of Boyup Brook
- d) Tuesday 3rd December 2024, Shire of Nannup & AGM

Meeting Closed: 7.22pm