

SGRF AGENDA

Meeting no. 52

9.00am, Friday 2 February 2024
via MS Teams

*'We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are meeting.
We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities
who may be here today.'*



**Southern
Rural Water**

Managing Water. Serving Communities.

Our Vision

Great value for customers and community through excellence in rural water management



Our Trademark Values

We are Always Safe and Accountable working as One Team to deliver a lasting Legacy.

Southern Rural Water's Groundwater and Rivers Strategic Focus Areas

June 2023 – June 2024

There are five strategic focus areas for SRW in the Groundwater and Rivers area over the next 12 months:

1. Continued advocacy for sustainable access to water for irrigators via the implementation of GM2030, policy reforms in surface water management and key stakeholder groups.
2. Continue to encourage a flexible trading market through improved internal procedures and Government policies.
3. Provide more real time information for customers on water usage following the integration of meter reading data with mySRW portal to improve decision making.
4. Undertake more detailed water resource assessment across our systems through investment of unregulated water sales funds and the continuation of the Supply/Demand projects.
5. Understanding the implications of rapidly evolving cultural water policy on customer aspirations for improved access to water.

An update on what SRW is doing in relation to these focus areas is provided in the Groundwater and Rivers Update at each meeting.

Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum

Meeting 52

Date	Time	Location
2 February 2024	9.00am – 12.00pm	Via MS Teams

Topic		
1	Acknowledgement of County	Chair
2	Welcome and Apologies - Welcome new member - Member introduction	Chair
3	Declaration of conflicts of interest	All
4	Confirmation of minutes – Meeting 51	Chair
4.1	Attachment – Draft Minutes SGRF Meeting 51, 1 December 2023	
5	Business Arising	Chair
5.1	Attachment - Business arising from previous meetings	
6	Committee Appointments (Chair and Deputy Chair vote)	Simon Wilkinson
7	<u>GUEST SPEAKERS</u>	
7.1	Border Groundwaters Agreement Review Committee for the South Australian/Victorian border.	Matt Hudson
7.2	Southwest Limestone Barriers to Trade Project update	Clinton Hartley
8	<u>PRINCIPAL MATTERS – FOR DISCUSSION</u>	
8.1	Groundwater and Rivers update	Simon Wilkinson
8.2	Board update	Cameron FitzGerald
9	<u>PRINCIPAL MATTERS – FOR NOTING</u>	
9.1	Communications report	

10		<u>COMMITTEE MATTERS</u>	
	10.1	Important issues from other customer committees	Cameron FitzGerald
	10.2	Matters referred to the Board/board committee	Cameron FitzGerald
	10.3	2024 Committee workplan	
11		<u>GENERAL BUSINESS</u>	All
12		Meeting evaluation	
13		Next meeting	
14		Close	12.00pm

Item No: 1

Subject: **Acknowledgement of Country**

'We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today.'

Item No: 2

Subject: **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair will welcome attendees and note any apologies for this meeting.

SRW Management will welcome the new SGRF member to the committee and all members will be provided an opportunity to give a brief overview of their background and why they join the committee.

Item No: 3

Subject: **Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

The Chair will ask forum members to declare any conflicts of interest relating to the business of this meeting.

Item No: 4
Subject: Confirmation of minutes – Meeting 51
Action: For approval
Author: Hayley Taylor – Executive Assistant
Date: 19/01/2024

PURPOSE

1. To ensure that the minutes taken of committee meeting 51 are an accurate and sufficient record of discussions held and decisions made at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That the committee approves the minutes of meeting 51 held on Friday 1 December 2023.

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

2. Minutes are confirmed at each committee meeting.

BACKGROUND

3. Draft minutes are circulated after each committee meeting. Any suggested changes are captured as track changes, for consideration and confirmation at the following meeting.

REPORT

4. Draft minutes of meeting 51, held in person in Melbourne, on Friday 1 December 2023 are provided in attachment 4.1.
5. **Budget impact:** Nil
6. **Link to strategy:** Nil.
7. **Risk:** Committee meeting minutes are a public record and may be subject to release under Freedom of Information. Directors should ensure that minutes accurately and appropriately reflect the discussion and decisions of the meeting.

NEXT STEPS

Who	Action
Meeting Secretary	Once confirmed, the minutes will be saved in Southern Rural Water's document management system and Southern Rural Water's Website.

Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum

Minutes of Meeting 51

Date	Time	Location
1 December 2023	9:30am	Hub Southern Cross, Melbourne and via MS Teams

Present

Mr Ross Ingram	Chair
Mr Bruce Vallance	Forum Member (via MS Teams)
Mr Daniel Hammond	Forum Member
Mr Daniel Toohey	Forum Member
Ms Josie Zilm	Forum Member
Mr Kevin Stark	Forum Member (via MS Teams)
Mr Norm Drew	Forum Member
Mr Steve Marshall	Forum Member (via MS Teams)

In Attendance

Mr Cameron FitzGerald	Managing Director, SRW
Mr Simon Wilkinson	General Manager Service Delivery, SRW
Ms Hayley Taylor	Executive Assistant, SRW (minutes)
Ms Penny Winbanks	Manager Statutory Functions
Mr Russell Tomlin	Manager Operations and Compliance Groundwater and Rivers

Apologies

Dr Jane Doolan	Board Director, SRW
Mr Tom Wallace	Forum Member
Mr Matt Gleeson	Forum Member

Guests

Mr Jesse Rose	DEECA
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1. Acknowledgement of County

The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which the meeting was held.

2. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and noted the apologies including Dr Jane Doolan who had an existing commitment.

Ms Penny Winbanks, Manager Statutory Functions and Mr Russell Tomlin, Manager Operations and Compliance Groundwater and Rivers were introduced to the committee.

3. Declaration of conflicts of interest

The Chair asked attendees to declare any conflicts of interest relating to the business of this meeting.

There were no new conflicts raised.

4. Confirmation of minutes – Meeting 50

The minutes of meeting 50 held on 20 September 2023 were **approved**.

Moved: Daniel Hammond **Second:** Norm Drew

5. Business Arising

The report was taken as read.

Management confirmed that Water is Life had been reprinted, and copies would be sent to members as soon as they were received from DEECA.

6. GUEST SPEAKERS

6.1 GM2030

Mr Jesse Rose, Co-Executive Director, Water Resource Strategy, DEECA, introduced himself to the committee and provided an overview of his role and discussed the GM2030 project highlighting:

- The project aims to implement the framework that details priorities for groundwater management. The list of priorities inform the workplan for the next 7 years.
- The DEECA project team are currently building an evidence base around groundwater use including whether aquifers are at risk.
- The Sustainable Yields project is a priority focus area under GM2030. The project is investigating both monitoring and metering data from across the state to gain an understanding of sustainable yields in different systems. The DEECA team is building a methodology to add new data as it comes in and the sustainable yields data will also have a 'level of confidence' rating as

there are some areas with a lot of monitoring data, and other areas, typically unincorporated Groundwater areas, will have a low level of data confidence.

- This data will inform future policy options and help identify sustainable yields and rules for take in previously minimally or unused groundwater areas.
- Once the evidence base has been established, DEECA will come back to customers in 2024, to test and seek feedback on policy options.
- At the moment, there will be not changes for Groundwater users but there might be opportunities in the long term to consider how water is taken.
- DEECA will be seeking feedback from customers in 2024.

The Committee inquired as to whether some areas are over allocated. Mr Rose advised that this is a question that needs to be answered, and DEECA are unclear on the policy response if unsustainable take was found (long term decline). He advised there would have to be discussions with community around longer term plans but an aim of GM2030 is to have a long term resource that is sustainable into the future.

The committee inquired as to whether the monitoring considers offshore gas drilling and the impact on water resources as well as the impact to the filling of mine voids. Mr Rose advised that the impact of offshore gas drilling will be considered but the impact of filling mine voids does not fall into the scope of this project.

The Manager Statutory Function noted the Groundwater Atlas' developed by SRW considered impact of offshore drilling. The committee Chair suggested there could be an opportunity to update the atlas once the technical GM2030 work has been completed.

The Chair expressed the importance of communication with community and farmers. It was recommended that DEECA showing real data to customers, and don't just show high level information as farmers will be the first to know if there is a change in aquifer levels.

The committee discussed whether DEECA had considered using customer bores, and monitoring data and individual hydrological assessments as part of their data collection.

The committee thanked Mr Rose for attending the meeting.

Mr Rose left the meeting at 10:14am.

7. PRINCIPLE MATTERS – FOR DISCUSSION

7.1 Groundwater and Rivers update

The report was taken as read.

Mr Simon Wilkinson, General Manager Service Delivery highlighting:

- Ms Penny Winbanks, Manager Statutory Functions and Mr Russell Tomlin Manager Operations and Compliance Groundwater and Rivers had

commenced in their respective positions at SRW. Both Managers provided the committee of an overview of their experience.

- SRW has issued show cause notices and Ministerial Directions for dams in Moorabool where investigations indicate there are possible or confirmed non-compliances.
- SRW has undertaken a comprehensive communication campaign regarding customers compliance obligations, including online, social media and mailout material. SRW is now looking at other communication avenues including articles being placed in local newspapers.
- The South-West Limestone Barriers to Trade project has commenced with a workshop and survey to be carried out within the next few months.
- Macalister Trading Platform has been rolled out and SRW will look to expand the platform to other areas if the trial is successful.
- SRW has implemented an auction platform for water sales. The sale for the Mitchell River winter fill will occur on 7 December 2023 and will utilise this new platform.
- The Managing Director explained the current process being undertaken to negotiate the allocation of 16GL from the 3/4 bench between agriculture, environment and Traditional Owners. The SVID study demonstrated there is a business case for expanded irrigation along the Latrobe River. The study indicated there is between nine to 13GL of initial demand, that could produce high value crops. Environmental studies have indicated there is deficient water for the environment and Traditional Owner groups are seeking self-determination.

The committee reiterated the importance of communication with irrigators and users of the water before decisions are made.

The Managing Director stated that SRW will continue to support sustainable expansion of irrigator water use and the SVID study provides an evidence base to support the achievement of long term sustainable irrigated agriculture.

The committee discussed the water entitlements held by power companies, that are being used to fill the mine voids and whether this water would become available in the future.

The committee discussed the importance Traditional Owners retaining ownership of their water allocations and the possible benefits to irrigators if Traditional Owners were to trade their water.

- The committee discussed the benefits of high flow take from rivers which would mean a change of policy. The Managing Director advised that this is one of the priority discussions that SRW is having with DEECA regarding the policy.
- Management discussed different compliance approaches and noted that a warning letter is part of SRW's enforcement actions, and different scenarios will warrant different types of enforcements. SRW will continue to assist customers to remain compliant with regular meter reads, helping connect customers to trade water before they go over their allocation.

- The members discussed the Moorabool Dams project and inquired as to whether previous communication had taken place with licence holders in the area. Management confirmed that a general letter went to all licence holders advising that SRW was undertaking investigations in the area and the Show Cause letters are the first direct communications with the dam owner. Management advised that SRW will be moving to more of a proactive compliance approach utilising mapping tools, drones etc rather than reactive compliance and focus on areas that are stressed.

7.2 Board Update

Mr Cameron FitzGerald, Managing Director, advised the members of issues the board is currently discussing, including:

- The Strategic Futures Forum was held with customers and stakeholders and provided an opportunity to talk to a wide variety of stakeholders. Two members of the SGRF attended on the day. Topics discussed included:
 - planning decisions and how they impact farmland and incursion of new developments into farmland.
 - Water trading and the balance between getting more water in use for farmers, versus the sleeper licences being considered good for the environment.
- Three new Directors have commenced on the SRW Board.
- The ratification of nominees for members to SRW's customer consultative committee is included on the December board meeting agenda. Members will be updated on the outcome shortly after the board meeting.
- The first drop in session was held for Bacchus Marsh, and positive feedback was received. The next session will be held around March 2024.
- The Werribee Green Wedge committee is being utilised to engage with Werribee customers. This committee is still a work in progress and SRW is working with the council to refresh its Terms of Reference.

The Managing Director provided the committee an update on the current flood situation and detailed how SRW managed the inflows and outflows to prevent a major flood occurring downstream from Lake Glenmaggie. The committee discussed how floods are managed by SRW. The General Manager Service Delivery discussed his experience of working out of Glenmaggie during the October 2023 flood and his appreciation of the impact of flooding to downstream communities.

Management advised that SRW will continue to review processes to ensure that the organisation work to continually improve.

Key messages from the committee will be communicated to the board at the next meeting.

8. PRINCIPLE MATTERS – FOR NOTING

8.1 Communications Report

The report was taken as read.

A member advised that some customers do not use social media and suggested that some articles could be duplicated on other platforms.

9. COMMITTEE MATTERS

9.1 Important issues from other customer committees

This item was covered in agenda item 7.2.

9.2 Matters referred to/by the Board/Board Committee

This matter was covered in agenda item 7.2.

9.3 2024 Meeting schedule

The committee **agreed** to the proposed schedule.

Management **confirmed** that placeholder invitations for the 2024 committee meetings will be forward to members.

The committee discussed opportunities for committee members to meet with the board and advised that members used to be invited to meet with the board after board meetings. Management **agreed** to reinstate these meetings.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Provide opportunities for members of SRW's customer committees to meet with board members from time to time.	C. FITZGERALD	30/03/2024

9.4 2024 Committee workplan

The committee **noted** the 2024 committee workplan. The committee **requested** Management provide an update from the SRW representative that sits on the Border Groundwaters Agreement Review Committee for the South Australia, Victorian boarder, at the next meeting.

Management highlighted:

- Once a consultant has been engaged for the Small Farm Dams project, which will review how Domestic and Stock Dams are being used and whether they are appropriately licenced, Management will add updates on this project to the workplan.
- The SWL Barriers to Trading project report is due in March 2024. SRW will keep the committee updated on progress and outcomes of the project.

A member advised that communication with customers is important, especially in areas where there are other issues being addressed (i.e. landowners working with authorities on the transmission line locations) meaning landholders could be hostile until they realise SRW are communicating on something unrelated. The member suggested that it would be good to know when SRW will be onsite so they can ensure gates are open.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Matt Hudson to attend the February 2024 SGRF meeting and provide an update on discussions with the Border Groundwaters Agreement Review Committee for the South Australia, Victorian boarder	M. HUDSON	01/02/2023

10. General Business

Thankyou to outgoing members

Mr Cameron FitzGerald, Managing Director thanked Ms Zilm for her valuable contribution to the committee and SRW, as well as her contribution to the Latrobe Irrigators group.

Ms Zilm thanked the members and SRW for the opportunity to be part of the SGRF, and what she has learnt through her involvement with the committee.

11. Meeting evaluation

The Chair sought feedback on the effectiveness of this meeting.

The committee advised that:

- It was agreed that it was good to meet in person at least once per year,
- A true test to the effectiveness of the meeting is how much the board and SRW staff get out of the meeting, and
- The committee appreciates the complexities and issues that SRW need to deal with when advocating for irrigators with the Government.

The committee **requested** that the date for the next Strategic Futures Forum be communicated as early as possible.

Action	Action Officer	Due Date
Advise the SGRF of the date of the Strategic Futures Forum as soon as it is known.	H. TAYLOR	30/01/2024

12. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum will be held on Friday 2 February 2024 via MS Teams.

13. Close

With no further business the meeting was declared closed at 11:58am.

Item No: **5**
Subject: **Business arising from previous meetings**
Action: **For noting**
Author: **Hayley Taylor – Executive Assistant**
Date: **22/01/2024**

PURPOSE

1. To allow the forum to assess management progress on items identified for action from Southern Groundwater and River Forum meetings.

RECOMMENDATION: That the forum **notes** the status of business arising action items, including:

- one action item has been completed,
- one action item will be discussed within this agenda, and
- once action item will remain open until the date of the Strategic Futures Forum has been confirmed.

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

2. Business arising is considered each meeting.

BACKGROUND

3. Actions are captured in the minutes each month and transposed into risk wizard where base and aspirational dates are added along with the responsibility for completion.

REPORT

4. Attachment 5.1 describes each action item, its status, and a comment on its progress.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS - Southern GWR forum

Action progress: Complete

Action	Source	Due date	Completed date	Accountable officer	Status comment	
25328	Provide opportunities for members of SRW's customer committees to meet with board members from time to time.	SGRF meeting 51- 1 December 2023, Agenda Item 9.3, Meeting schedule.	30/03/24	22/01/24	Cameron FitzGerald	Opportunities to grow connection between SGRF and the board will continue to be identified across the year, including through invitation to the annual Strategic Futures Forum.

Action progress: This agenda

Action	Source	Due date	Completed date	Accountable officer	Status comment	
25329	Matt Hudson to attend the February 2024 SGRF meeting and provide an update on discussions with the Border Groundwaters Agreement Review Committee for the South Australia, Victorian boarder	SGRF meeting 51- 1 December 2023, Agenda Item 9.4 2024 Committee Workplan	01/02/24	19/01/24	Matthew Hudson	Refer to agenda item 7.1.

Action progress: Future items (include a status comment when due date prior to next meeting)

Action	Source	Due date	Completed date	Accountable officer	Status comment
25330	Advise the SGRF of the date of the Strategic Futures Forum as soon as it is known.	SGRF meeting 51- 1 December 2023, Agenda Item 11 - Meeting evaluation	29/03/24	Hayley Taylor	Due date extended as date has not been confirmed. Action to remain open until date is confirmed, and SGRF notified.

Item No: **6**

Subject: **Committee Appointments – Chair and Deputy Chair vote**

SRW Management will call for nominations for Chair and Deputy Chair of the forum, including acknowledging any nominations received prior to the meeting.

Members will undertake a vote and the successful nominees will commence their positions at the May 2024 committee meeting.

Item No: **7.1**

Subject: **Border Groundwaters Agreement Review Committee for the South Australian/Victorian border.**

Mr Matthew Hudson, Principal Hydrogeologist, SRW, and Mr Randall Nott, Senior Manager Groundwater Assessment and Modelling, DEECA will provide the committee with an overview of the Border Groundwaters Agreement including:

- the purpose of the agreement,
 - groundwater resources in the area,
 - key features of the agreement, and
 - work of the committee.
-

Item No: **7.2**

Subject: **Southwest Limestone Barriers to Trade – Project Update**

Mr Clinton Hartley, Strategy and Business Planner, SRW will provide the committee with an update on the Southwest Limestone Barriers to Trade project.

Item No: 8.1

Subject: Strategic Focus Areas and Groundwater and Rivers update

Action: For noting

Author: Penny Winbanks, Manager Statutory Functions

Date: 14/11/2023

Focus area	Commentary
<p>Strategic focus 1.</p> <p>Continued advocacy for sustainable access to water for irrigators via the implementation of GM2030, policy reforms in surface water management and key stakeholder groups.</p>	<p>SRW is currently involved with a DEECA review of <u><i>Policies for Protecting High Value Groundwater Dependant Ecosystems</i></u>.</p> <p>DEECA will continue to be invited to SGRF meetings to discuss GM2030.</p>
<p>Strategic focus 2.</p> <p>Continue to encourage a flexible trading market through improved internal procedures and Government policies.</p>	<p>SRW has commenced work to explore opportunities for a trade platform supporting trade in unregulated systems focusing on the South West Limestone as a pilot. This work will follow a similar approach to that used to develop the trade platform for the Macalister Irrigation Area.</p> <p>A project update is provided within this report.</p>
<p>Strategic focus 3.</p> <p>Provide more real time information for customers on water usage following the integration of meter reading data with mySRW portal to improve decision making</p>	<p>SRW's focus for mySRW is to deliver an e-billing upgrade. Customers will have access to a payment gateway for applications and online payment features. Customers will be able to receive bills electronically and pay bills immediately via gateway.</p> <p>The team is working toward completing this project this financial year.</p>
<p>Strategic focus 4.</p> <p>Undertake more detailed water resource assessment across our systems through investment of unregulated water sales funds and the continuation of the Supply/Demand projects.</p>	<p>The SRW Resource and Strategy team have developed a prioritised plan for the review and renewal of local management plans across the SRW region.</p> <p>Focus areas are to include water systems that have been subject to water sales over the past 5 years.</p>
<p>Strategic focus 5.</p> <p>Understanding the implications of rapidly evolving cultural water policy on customer aspirations for improved access to water.</p>	<p>SRW are working to document agreed processes, procedures and exploring the need for organisational policy positions relating to certain matters to ensure transparency of process and equity amongst water users.</p> <p>This will link to work being completed by the Strategy, People & Culture Group.</p>

Issue	Commentary
Water Sales	<p>The online auction for Mitchell River winterfill water sale occurred on 7 December 2023. A new auction platform was used, and proved successful, with minimal issues reported.</p> <p>A total volume of 2,000ML was available in various lot sizes ranging from 25ML to 250ML and a total of 1.250ML was successfully sold at a value of \$520,950.</p>
South West Limestone - Barriers to trade project	<p>DEECA has funded a social research project to understand the barriers to trade within the Southwest Limestone GMA.</p> <p>RMCG are undertaking this work with a report due to be issued to SRW and project sponsors DEECA in March 2024 with the findings and recommendations.</p> <p>An interim update will be provided at this meeting, with further information provided following the finalisation of the study.</p>
Compliance and enforcement	<p>Communications to Customers</p> <p>SRW have implemented a communications plan which outlined campaigns and communication methods to ensure that customers were aware of their compliance obligations, and the zero tolerance approach to water theft. An outline of some of the items SRW has done to communicate this message to customers are outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero tolerance message featured on Allocation Bank Account statements to customers in August. • Social media posts and videos • Full website content update https://www.srw.com.au/water-and-storage/water-management/compliance • Website news items https://www.srw.com.au/news-media • Video and stories featured in customer quarterly newsletter • Zero tolerance fact sheet produced for distribution by field officers. Copies of the fact sheet produced is included as Appendix 1. <p>SRW are also finding additional opportunities to speak about zero tolerance, including into other communication material were possible.</p> <p>Work will continue with field staff to create fact sheets for activities that customers could complete themselves, such as 'How to read a meter'.</p>
Moorabool Dams Investigation	<p>SRW has continued to investigate alleged non-compliances regarding the construction of private dams</p>

Issue	Commentary
	<p>in the Moorabool catchment. 220 dams have been individually assessed by means of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing SRW records (i.e. is a licence in place) • Satellite Mapping • Field inspections • Drone inspections of properties where access was difficult or additional photogrammetry data was necessary to assess compliance <p>Assessment of these dams is being undertaken for compliance with the Water Act which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially hazardous • Irrigation take and use • Illegal construction on a waterway <p>Comprehensive investigations are being conducted in relation to matters where there is a suspected breach. The process is then to present the evidence to the Delegated Authority for determination on whether a breach has occurred.</p> <p>‘Show cause’ notices have been sent to landholders where investigations have indicated that the dam may be non-compliant with the Water Act. We have issued 37 show cause notices up to this point.</p> <p>Information provided by the landholder assists SRW in determining whether Ministerial Directions will be issued.</p> <p>SRW will work through an orderly process focussing on the most significant issues first, giving consideration to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community safety • size of impact on catchment flows • association with any illegal take and use for irrigation <p>There are three potential outcomes of the investigations, Ministerial Directions (S.78 & S.80), Notice of Contravention (S.151) and no further action (formal warning letter or no offence identified)</p> <p>We have issued a number of directions and one (1) contravention. Some of these matters have resulted in no further action and warning letters where appropriate.</p> <p>We are also identifying opportunities to issue Penalty Infringement Notices (PIN’s) for those offences which are appropriate within Schedule 1 of the Water Infringements Regulations 2020.</p> <p>A number of the directions issued have resulted in an appeal to VCAT.</p>

Item No: **8.2**

Subject: **Board Update**

Dr Jane Doolan, SRW Board Director, will provide an overview of discussions at the most recent Board meeting.

Item No: **9.1**
Subject: **Communications and Engagement report – February 2024**
Action: **For noting**
Author: **Kris Perkovic, Senior Community Engagement Adviser**
Date: **18/01/2024**

PURPOSE

- To update the Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum on recent communications and engagement activities.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee note the report.

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

2. Communications and engagement activity is reported at each meeting.

BACKGROUND

3. The Communications and Engagement team develops communications plans, issues media releases, manages the website and social media, customer and community engagement activities and looks after media enquiries.

REPORT

4. Quarterly newsletter

Southern Rural Water issued its third quarterly region-wide customer newsletter in late November 2023. It was distributed to customers with a valid email address.

5. Website

A selection of stories published on our website focused on groundwater and rivers.

<https://www.srw.com.au/news-media/celebrating-our-2023-achievements>

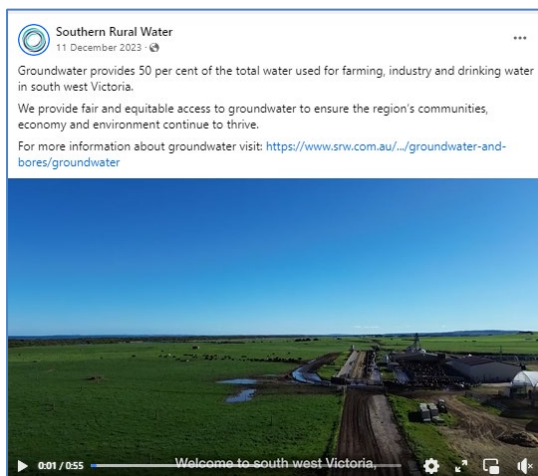
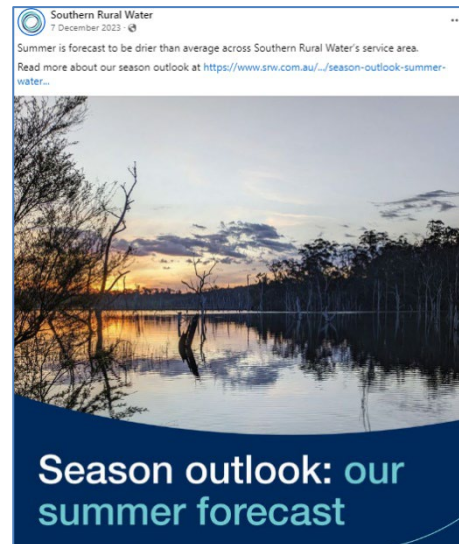
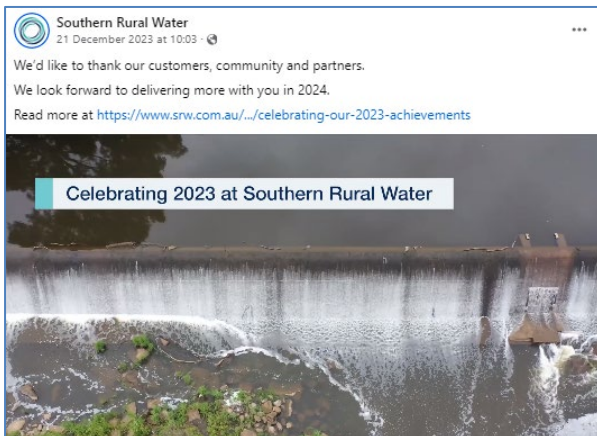
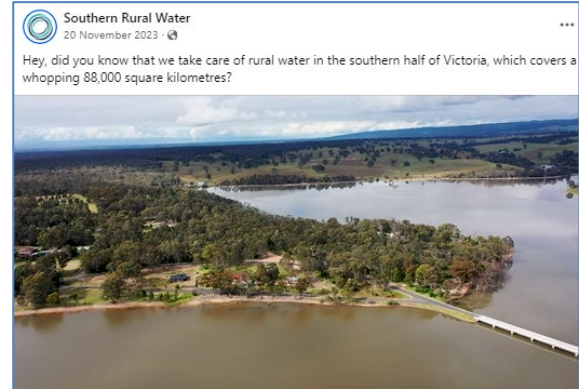
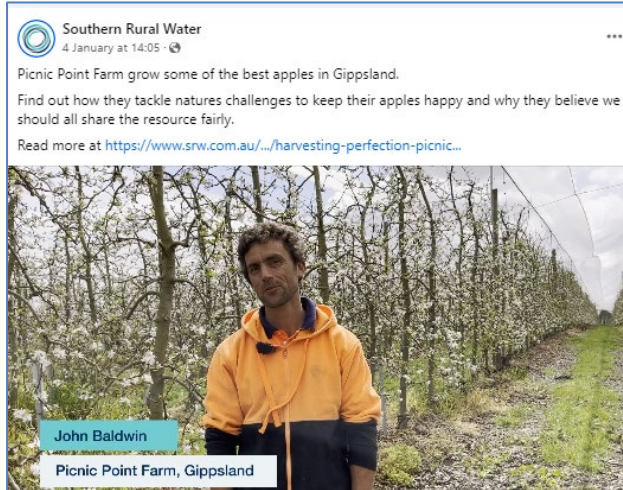
<https://www.srw.com.au/news-media/season-outlook-summer-water-demand-expected-be-strong>

<https://www.srw.com.au/news-media/strategic-projects-sustainable-water-future>

<https://www.srw.com.au/news-media/new-framework-ensure-fairness-water-entitlement-holders>

6. Social media

Our social media campaigns have received good responses. Below are some examples of content since the last meeting. Please follow our social media pages to see more.



NEXT STEPS: A further update will be provided at the next SGRF meeting.

Item No: **10.1**

Subject: **Important issues from other customer committees**

Cameron FitzGerald, Managing Director, will provide a verbal update on important issues raised at other customer committees.

Item No: **10.2**

Subject: **Matters referred to the board/board committee.**

Dr Jane Doolan, SRW Board Director, will discuss matters that will be referred to the Board.

Item No: **10.3**

Subject: **2024 Committee workplan**

Southern Rural Water will provide updates to the committee as indicated in the 2024 Committee workplan. Additional items can be added to the agenda at the request of committee members and by SRW to address any current issues or events.

During meetings, the committee can request that items are added to the workplan to ensure that updates on specific topics are provided at key intervals.

The workplan will be included as an agenda item for each meeting.

A copy of the 2024 Committee workplan is included as attachment 10.3.1 for **noting**.

SOUTHERN GROUNDWATER AND RIVERS FORUM ROLLING WORK PLAN

	Requirement	2024				2025				Notes
		FEB	MAY	AUG	NOV	FEB	MAY	AUG	NOV	
Principal & Business Matters	Communications report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Board update	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	GWR Strategic Focus Areas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Report on progress each meeting as part of the Manager GWR update. Update Focus Area's each May.
	Plan for new Financial Year			✓				✓		Plan to address Key Focus Areas
	Groundwater and Rivers Update	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Brief paragraph to update to committee on current projects and issues
Policy and strategic direction	Committee appointments	✓								As required. (Chair and Deputy Chair vote)
	Compliance and Enforcement			✓				✓		EOFY performance
	Climate Outlook and Drought Response Update				✓				✓	
	Corporate Plan				✓				✓	For noting. Full plan provided as discretionary reading
Project updates (DEECA and SRW)	SWL Barriers to Trade	✓	✓							Final report to be presented - May 2024
	SWS 4.13 – Small Farm Dams									Once consultant has been engaged by DEECA
	GM2030									At key project milestones
Admin / Other	Meeting evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	MD to provide verbal update
	Important issues from other customer committees	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	As required
	Matters referred to the committee by the board/board committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Committee Workplan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Item No: **11**

Subject: **General Business**

The Chair will introduce any items of general business.

Item No: **12**

Subject: **Meeting evaluation**

The Chair will seek feedback on the effectiveness of this meeting.

The Chair will ask the forum to assess the performance of the committee at this meeting, using the below questions as a guide.

1. Do we think the committee is adding value?
 2. What's working?
 3. What's not working?
-

Item No: **13**

Subject: **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Southern Groundwater and Rivers Forum will be held on Friday 3 May 2024 via MS Teams.

Item No: **14**

Subject: **Close**

The Chair will close the meeting.
