

Water User Reference Group Meeting Communiqué

Water User Reference Group (WURG) - Communiqué

Meeting 1 – Wednesday 6 May 2020

All members were in attendance, except for apologies from Barkandji and NBAN representatives.

Purpose of meeting

The key focus of this meeting was to:

- obtain an initial understanding of the high-level interests of the group represented by each member
- obtain feedback on the Panel's proposed process for carrying out the assessment, including to provide transparency of WURG activities
- obtain feedback on the proposed public consultation process
- agree on objectives for each subsequent WURG meeting during the assessment process.

Key items of discussion

The group was generally supportive of the proposed process for carrying out the assessment and agreed on measures to promote transparency of the WURG activities. Feedback was provided during and after the meeting to enhance public consultation activities and the involvement of First Nations people. Key issues raised in the meeting by the WURG representatives, for further discussion in future meetings, included:

- the way in which the event, and decisions around the event, were communicated to stakeholders and the wider public
- the level of transparency regarding why, how and when decisions were made
- the evidence used to make decisions around the event and how the priorities specified by the *Water Management Act 2000* were implemented
- when, why and how flow targets were set and changed
- difficulties the community faced in accessing real-time data during the event
- alternative frameworks for managing these types of events
- how the NSW Government will use the Panel's recommendations to make meaningful changes.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 21 May 2020 and will discuss the evidence base and decision-making process for making and lifting of embargos during the event.