



MURRUMBIDGEE SDLAM PROJECTS

Yanco Community Advisory Group

Draft terms of reference

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In conjunction with the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment are delivering the NSW Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism projects under the *Basin Plan 2012*.

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Background

The Murray–Darling Basin Plan 2012 sets limits on the amount of water available for urban, industrial and agricultural use in the Basin. These limits are known as sustainable diversion limits (SDLs). The Basin Plan includes a sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism (SDLAM) to enable environmental outcomes to be achieved with less water recovery from consumptive users such as farmers.

In 2017 the Australian, New South Wales, South Australian and Victorian governments notified a package of 36 supply and constraints projects under the SDLAM program. The Basin states are responsible for implementing the supply and constraints measures. States are also responsible for assisting the Commonwealth deliver efficiency measures under the SDLAM (upwater), as opposed to supply and constraints projects downwater. Under the Basin Plan, projects must be ready to enter into operation by 30 June 2024.

The Water division of Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is responsible for the delivering the SDLAM program within NSW, which involves 22 separate projects.

You can view a summary of all 36 SDLAM projects on the Murray–Darling Basin Authority website at mdba.gov.au/basin-plan-roll-out/sustainable-diversion-limits/sdl-adjustment-proposals-state-projects

In February 2017, NSW signed a funding schedule with the Commonwealth to undertake a stage one preconstruction feasibility study into ten SDLAM projects. These projects are grouped into three subprograms for planning, delivery and efficiency purposes:

- Murrumbidgee
- Darling
- Murray.

Three projects within the Murrumbidgee subprogram closely relate to the Yanco Creek system:

- improved flow management works at Murrumbidgee River (Yanco Creek Offtake project). This project proposes infrastructure capable of raising Yanco Weir pool in the Murrumbidgee River up to 2.5 metres above current full supply level, and the construction of a new regulator in the Yanco Creek offtake cutting
- modernising supply systems for effluent creeks at the Murrumbidgee River (Yanco Creek system). This project proposes new and/or modified re-regulation weirs, greater use of water deliveries into the Yanco Creek system from Murray Irrigation and/or Coleambally Irrigation earthen channel infrastructure, plus additional flow monitoring locations
- computer-aided river management for the Murrumbidgee River (CARM), a computer program that provides improved river operations forecasting and monitoring capabilities.

WaterNSW developed preliminary business cases for each of these projects in 2015. You can view the business cases on the Murray–Darling Basin Authority website at mdba.gov.au/publications/mdba-reports/sustainable-diversion-limit-adjustment-mechanism-assessment-draft

There are also aspects of the Murrumbidgee Constraints project that are likely to be relevant to Yanco Creek system:

- The Murrumbidgee Constraints project proposes to invest in new infrastructure and agreements (for example, water inundation easements) with landholders to enable flows of up to 40,000 megalitres per day delivered into the Murrumbidgee River at Wagga Wagga for managed environmental flow events.

The Water division of Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will engage with the local community and stakeholders throughout the planning, approvals and construction process in accordance with the objectives of the SDLAM program, the stakeholder engagement framework and the Yanco Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, which will be developed in consultation with the local community and stakeholders.

The Yanco Community Advisory Group (YCAG) will form one of four key consultative groups associated with this suite of projects. Other groups are:

- Yanco Technical Advisory Group (YTAG)
- Yanco Aboriginal Advisory Group (YAAG)
- NSW Murrumbidgee Project Steering Committee (MPSC)

Purpose

The purpose of the YCAG is to provide a forum for a cooperative, whole-of-community approach to designing, planning, assessing, monitoring, approving and constructing SDLAM projects associated with the Yanco Creek system. The projects will assist the NSW Government meet its SDL commitments under the Murray–Darling Basin Plan.

Scope

The YCAG will provide a:

- forum for government, industry, community and scientific consultation on a range of issues to do with the Yanco SDLAM projects, consistent with delivering outcomes that balance economic, environmental and social (including cultural heritage) interests. This includes but is not limited to specific advice in relation to:
 - draft project plans with a key focus on:
 - project logic diagrams
 - live risk registers
 - engagement and communication plans
 - program schedules
 - draft project options identification and design
 - draft project options evaluation
 - draft Infrastructure NSW Gateway 1-equivalent review documentation
 - draft Infrastructure NSW Gateway 2-equivalent review documentation
 - procurement
 - planning for lodgement of statutory approval applications
- link between the local community, stakeholders and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

Responsibility

The YCAG can make recommendations to the department regarding Yanco SDLAM project planning and implementation. However, it has no decision-making responsibility.

Table 1 provides a brief overview of the responsibilities of each community group represented within the YCAG.

Table 1. Responsibility and Core Interest of key agencies and groups in the YCAG

Agency or Group	Responsibility or Core Interest
Department of Planning Industry and Environment—Water	Lead NSW agency for the SDLAM program Lead NSW agency on water management
Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council	Representative group for over 150 landholders within the Yanco Creek system
Councils	Represent constituents
Irrigation Industry	Represent irrigators within the district
South West Anglers	Recreational
Creek Country Alliance	Community
Riverina Water	Town water supplies
Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists	Environmental

The final membership of groups will be determined through an application and assessment process.

Membership

Table 2. YCAG membership

Name	Position	Organisation
David Leslie	Principal Project Officer—Murrumbidgee	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—Water
David Clarke	Senior Project Officer	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—Water
Rod Hardwick	Senior Project Officer	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—Water

The membership of other people will be determined through an application and assessment process.

A single proxy representative can attend a meeting in lieu of a member where circumstances prevent the member's attendance. The Chairperson and coordinator should be notified in advance of the meeting of proxy representatives.

A list of membership names and/or these terms of reference will be published on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website.

Format

An independent facilitator will chair meetings. Meetings consider matters related to the Yanco SDLAM program.

Meetings will be run in accordance with a formal agenda. The style of meetings may change depending on the primary issues of discussion at the time (for example, round table versus workshop format), but will typically include:

- progress updates including a review of actions
- development of ideas (e.g. alternative options)
- evaluation of options
- program planning
- problem-solving
- conflict resolution
- advice to the department for decision-making.

The format of the meetings may be face to face, videoconference or teleconference as determined by the Chairperson.

The Chairperson may also seek advice from members on issues out of session.

Operation

- The group operates in line with the NSW Department of Industry's Code of Ethics and Conduct
- All members must be frank and honest in their official dealings with each other and participate in the best interests of the NSW Government
- All members must declare any direct or indirect pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests at the commencement of any meeting and during any meeting if such interests become evident
- All members must respect the confidentiality of sensitive information as directed by the Chairperson
- Members may attend meetings in person or via teleconference/videoconference.
- If unable to attend, members must send delegates who are informed, able and authorised to attend in their place
- From time to time the group may require information or advice from an individual or organisation that has specific and relevant local knowledge. Such input should be arranged through the Chairperson
- Meeting papers will be distributed at least two working days in advance of meetings
- The group will prepare and adopt a workplan to guide the forward planning of agendas
- No member is authorised to speak to the media in relation to the Yanco SDLAM program from a YCAG perspective
- Members may speak to the media about Yanco SDLAM projects on behalf of the organisation they represent if they are authorised to do so, but not in their capacity as a member of the group.

Process

The role of the Chairperson is to:

- provide leadership to the group in its deliberations
- ensure that the group follows the code of conduct outlined in this document and the NSW Department of Industry's Code of Ethics and Conduct (3 December 2018)
- maintain confidentiality
- use appropriate negotiation, facilitation and conflict resolution tools when appropriate

- assist the group towards decision-making
- ensure that all group members receive copies of documents/papers in a timely manner
- create and manage a cooperative working relationship to assist the group in undertaking its functions and associated actions and measures
- use discretion with regard to the attendance at meetings by non-members and observers
- ensure that, where required, technical experts are invited to provide information to inform the group's discussions and decision-making
- ensure group decisions are recorded.

The obligations of the group members are to:

- maintain confidentiality where required
- share information with their respective branch and collaborate with other agencies consistent with a whole-of-government approach.
- work as a group cooperatively and inclusively
- participate and negotiate constructively to reach decisions
- contribute personal skills, knowledge and expertise to the decision-making process
- consider the existing budgetary and statutory limitations when developing advice and recommendations
- have the authority to speak on behalf of those they represent.

Decision-making

The YCAG will agree on advice and recommendations by consensus where possible.

Where consensus is not possible, a Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—Water representative will record all views and give these views further consideration before making a decision on an appropriate course of action.

Quorum

A quorum is five members, including at least one member from Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—Water.

Escalation of issues

If the YCAG cannot satisfactorily resolve a matter, the Chairperson may refer the matter to the NSW Murrumbidgee Project Steering Committee for further advice.

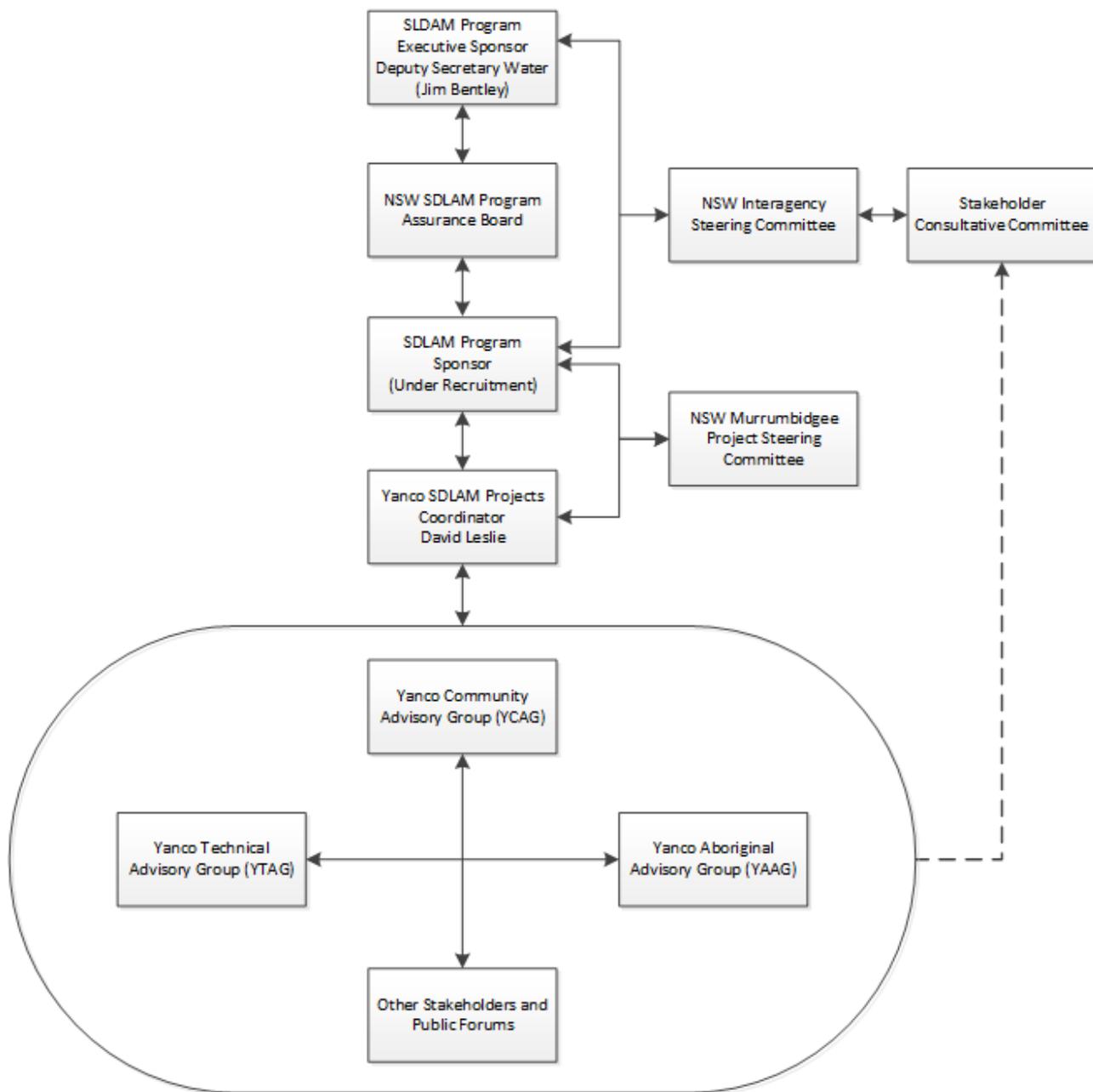


Figure 1. Yanco SDLAM governance diagram

Frequency of meetings

Meetings will be held monthly, or as determined by the Chairperson.

Reporting mechanism

Outcomes of meetings will be minuted and include a rolling actions table with responsibilities and delivery dates.

Minutes will be distributed to all group members.

Issues discussed and/or outcomes may be reported in accordance with the group's communications plan.

Records management

Records of all meetings and deliberations of the YCAG will be kept in the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment records management system.

Governance model and dependencies

The YCAG:

- is independent
- escalates issues through the Chairperson to the NSW Murrumbidgee Project Steering Committee
- records and maintains minutes of meetings in the department's document management system.

The membership and processes of the YCAG will be reviewed at least annually, including these terms of reference.

Secretariat support

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will provide secretariat support (through Rod Hardwick, Senior Project Officer).

The secretariat supports the YCAG by:

- coordinating meetings
- preparing the agenda
- preparing and/or distributing agenda papers
- preparing and distributing minutes
- maintaining a rolling actions register.

Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interests occurs where a member's private interests make it difficult for them to perform their duties impartially in the public interest. A conflict may be:

- an **actual conflict**, where there is a direct conflict between a member's current duties and responsibilities and their private interests

- a **perceived conflict**, where a person could reasonably perceive that a member's private interests are likely to improperly influence the performance of their official duties, whether or not this is the case
- a **potential conflict**, where a member has a private interest that could conflict with their official duties in the future.

Interests can be pecuniary (involving a likely financial gain) or non-pecuniary.

Group members should declare their conflicts of interest by:

- advising the Secretariat in writing, noting this will be kept on file
- declaring their relevant interests at the beginning of each meeting.

If a member of the group has an interest in a matter being considered or about to be considered at a meeting, and the interest appears to raise a conflict with the proper performance of the member's duties, the following actions should be taken:

- The member must, as soon as possible after the relevant facts have come to the member's knowledge, disclose the nature of the interest to the Chairperson and other group members at the meeting
- Record the disclosures
- Where a member discloses an interest relating to a matter under consideration by the group that member may, with the agreement of the group, contribute to the group's discussion of the matter
- Where a member discloses a pecuniary interest relating to a matter under consideration by the group that member must not participate in the final decision-making
- Where a member discloses a non-pecuniary interest relating to a matter under consideration by the group that member may, with the agreement of the group, participate in the final decision-making. In this case, the member must remain objective so that their interest does not bias or be seen to bias their decision-making.

Remuneration

Unless otherwise detailed in a formal contract or partnership agreement, there is no remuneration to group members for their participation in group meetings.

Appropriate travel and accommodation expenses will be compensated as required.

Contact

If you have any questions or feedback about these terms of reference contact:

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Version history

Table 3. Version history of these terms of reference

Version	Author(s)	Comments	Date
1.0	David Clarke	Preliminary draft	12/08/2019
1.1	Rob Irwin	Updated document to latest departmental template and edited content to be compliant with the department's editorial style guide.	22/08/2019
1.2	Rod Hardwick	Approved changes	28/08/2019