

## Water User Reference Group (WURG) Communiqué

*Meeting 4 – Thursday 18 June 2020*

All members were in attendance, with apologies from:

- Emma Carmody, Environmental Defender's Office representative;
- Malcolm Talbot, Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations representative;
- Kingsley Abdulla, Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations representative;
- Derek Hardman, Barkandji Native Title Corporation representative; and
- Uncle Badger Bates, Barkandji Native Title Corporation representative.

### Purpose of meeting

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the results from the assessment's initial phase of public consultation and the Panel's early draft key findings and recommendations.

### Key items of discussion

The Panel provided the group with an update of initial public consultation results from both the online survey and written submissions. Key themes from the community for future management of first flush events included:

- general support for the protection of first flows to meet critical needs
- the need to improve the level and means of communication before, during and after first flush events for water users and the community
- the need for advanced planning, (including objectives, targets, evidence base and forecasting model, decision criteria) - with regular updates as situations change, and with input from the local community and Traditional Owners
- the need for an authoritative, easy to access and easy to understand information platform
- the need to improve flow forecasting data (from both Queensland and NSW catchments)
- the need for first flush events to be managed at a Basin-wide scale to ensure connectivity
- the need for rules, including those applicable to floodplain harvesting, to ensure connectivity and protection of critical needs
- the need for timely, transparent decisions during the event, informed by local knowledge and consistent with the stated targets and rules
- support for first flush water management under water sharing rules to be applied in water sharing plans consistent with the Act rather than just using s 324 orders
- the need for resources and capability in agencies to do all this.

The Panel also shared their key draft findings and recommendations in order to get feedback from the group members.

### Next steps

The Independent Panel is preparing their draft report. The report will be made publicly available on Monday 13 July 2020. Public consultation on the draft report will run until 9 August 2020. The

# Independent Assessment of the Northern Basin First Flush Event

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## Water User Reference Group Meeting Communiqué

Independent Panel will be seeking community feedback in writing and via a webinar scheduled for Monday 27 July from 1.00pm to 2:30pm.

### Next meeting

The next meeting of the group will be held on Monday 20 July 2020 and will focus on the group's feedback on the Independent Panel's draft report.

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