

Lower Limestone Coast WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Minutes

Meeting No. 5, 29 March 2023, 10:30 am – 2:30 pm
Chardonnay Lodge

Objectives

- Summarise forestry principles discussion
- Discuss farm forestry
- Discuss target management levels
- Discuss reduction principles
- Discuss implementation of reductions
- Discuss risk management and protection measures

Attendees:

Group Attendees – Penny Schulz (Chair), Pete Bissell (Chair), Belinda Williamson, Claire Davies, Claire Harding, Graeme Hamilton, Kerry DeGaris, Michelle Irvine, , Terry Buckley, Wayne Hancock, Darren Shelden, Alan Rossouw, Melissa Herpich, James Prescott.

Staff Attendees – Sue Botting, Liz Perkins, Ryan Judd, Dean Zeven (Department for Environment and Water).

Apologies – Kylie Boston, Peter Balnaves, Nick Hillier, John Hunt.

Welcome and agenda

The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked advisory group members and staff for their attendance.

Minutes

Minutes from Meeting 4 confirmed as true and correct. Moved by: Terry Buckley. Seconded by: Belinda Williamson. All were in favour.

Action outcomes to note

The Limestone Coast Landscape Board resolved to undertake a comprehensive review of the principles for licencing components to determine if amendment is required. The review will include whether the principles could be simplified but will also consider risks to the environment or primary producers that changes could introduce. Review will also consider opportunities such as environmental allocations.

It was noted in review of these minutes in Meeting 6 that there could be benefits that occur from simplification of the licencing components as much as there could be risks.

Summary of forestry principles discussion

Liz Perkins provided an overview of the forestry principles discussion.

Key Points:

- Purpose of principles were to bring forestry into the water allocation plan and provide the administrative framework for implementation.
- Principles appear largely successful in this regard.
- Principles may be appropriate moving forward but some concerns around the deemed rate and whether it remains representative of current practice.

Discussion:

- Changes in groundwater trends in Coles and Short support that principles have been successful
- Discussion around whether the deemed rate really does need to be reviewed.
 - Seems to work from the perspective of the modelling. While there is variability in practices the deemed rates and subsequent modelling should represent standard practice and then vary from that point.
 - Noted that more research has been undertaken and new information should be considered in any review of the deemed rates.
- Concerns were raised as to what reviewing the deemed rate might mean, what decisions would be made in light of the review.
 - Discussion as to whether forestry allocations would be changed retrospectively should the deemed rates be considered an over or under estimate.
 - The current Plan allows for allocations to be amended should the volume of allocation provided be greater than that required. If a comprehensive review of the Plan is undertaken any review of the deemed rates would come back to the group for consideration.
 - Any outcomes from a review of the deemed rates would need to be considered in the full context of the Plan review, alongside the outcomes of other areas of review occurring, and ultimately groundwater resource condition.
 - There are no predetermined outcomes from any review of the deemed rates.

SAG DECISION

The Stakeholder Advisory Group recommends that the Limestone Coast Landscape Board undertakes a review of the assumptions that underpin the deemed rate. Review should consider available lines of evidence to inform the deemed rate.

Farm Forestry

Liz Perkins provided an overview farm forestry.

Key points

- Plan has principles around what can be defined as farm forestry.
- Purpose was an administrative burden around small plots of commercial forest.
- Plan considered likelihood of expansion of farm forestry as low.
- Plan makes an allowance for farm forestry in the water account.

Discussion:

- Key concerns raised were that the principles as they exist now don't prevent large scale commercial forestry to be undertaken outside of the water licensing requirements of the plan.
- Likelihood of this occurring was discussed and new drivers such as carbon offsets may increase the likelihood.

- Equity issues were discussed around the principles allowing the expansion of farm forestry to the detriment of licenced users.

SAG DECISION

The Stakeholder Advisory Group recommends that the Limestone Coast Landscape Board undertakes a review of the farm forestry principles and its risks and benefits.

Target Management Levels

Sue Botting provided an overview of the target management levels.

Key Points:

- The theory of how TML was determined in over allocated areas – different for whether management area was low, medium or high risk – is this theory sound?
- Border Groundwaters Agreement – AAV, PAV and how they relate to allocation in the plan.
- Consumptive Pools – required to establish them, current plan does not have these.
- Bundled vs partially and fully unbundled.
- Adaptive management.
 - Acceptable impact – an alternate approach to sustainable yield.
 - Padthaway example – Resource Condition Triggers, Resource Condition Limits.

Reductions Principles and implementation of reductions

Key Points:

- Confined aquifer – principles to manage risk in Kingston management area.
- Unconfined aquifer – stepped reductions principles and application.
- Resource condition – groundwater levels of selected management areas.

Discussion

- Noted that there could be some expansion of intensive animal keeping with conversion to housed dairy.
- Request for update on Table 1 of the plan. Licensing update this information monthly to inform inter-management trades.
- Whenever trades occur – data is backed up by on ground check – check meter, check that coppice has been killed.

Close of meeting

Meeting closed at 2:30 pm.

The Chair thanked the stakeholders and staff for attending.

Lower Limestone Coast WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Action Table

Action	LLC WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Actions	Status	Meeting 5 Update
1.1	Provide an overview of the Science Review process, outcomes and the work that has occurred since then at Meeting 2.	Ongoing	Summary of current status of work addressing recommendations presented. Further updates will be provided as needed.
1.2	LC Landscape Board Staff to provide relevant papers on the project portal for Stakeholder Advisory Group members to access	Ongoing	Papers provided. Ongoing operating procedure for the Group.
1.5	Convey stakeholder concerns around the Australian Rare Earths Limited development to the LC Landscape Board Governing Body.	Ongoing	To remain ongoing on the Action List and revisit when discussing mining related principles.
2.2	Session in future meeting on Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems to assist with stakeholder clarity.	Ongoing	
2.4	Provide summary report that takes recommendations from the Plan and places them against actions that have been undertaken.		

Action Table – Closed Items

Action	LLC WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Actions	Status
2.6	Arrange a presentation from industry representatives around how useful they have found the different licencing components and how they have used them in their businesses.	Complete
2.1	Provision of presentation, provision of reports from presentation	Complete
2.3	Paddock Tree report to be provided on the project portal.	Complete
2.5	Arrange a presentation from DEW Water Licencing on licencing components and their experiences and perspectives as the body that administers them.	Complete
1.3	Ground rules to be drafted and provided back to group	Complete
1.4	LC Landscape Board Staff prepare recommendation for the LC Landscape Board Governing Body on behalf of the Stakeholder Advisory Group. Recommendation to be considered by the LC Landscape Board Governing Body at its 28 October 2022 Meeting.	Complete

Lower Limestone Coast WAP Stakeholder Advisory Group Decision Register

Issue	Meeting	Decision
Farm forestry	Meeting 5	The Stakeholder Advisory Group recommends that the Limestone Coast Landscape Board undertakes a review of the farm forestry principles and its risks and benefits.
Forestry principles	Meeting 5	The Stakeholder Advisory Group recommends that the Limestone Coast Landscape Board undertakes a review of the assumptions that underpin the deemed rate. Review should consider available lines of evidence to inform the deemed rate.
Licensing components principles	Meeting 4	The Stakeholder Advisory Group recommends that the Limestone Coast Landscape Board undertakes a comprehensive review of the principles for licensing components to determine if amendment is required. Review should look at whether the principles could be simplified but must also consider risks to the environment or primary producers that changes could introduce. Review should also consider opportunities such as environmental allocations.
Volumetric conversion and bridging volume principles	Meeting 2	Recommend that the LC Landscape Board remove the volumetric conversion and bridging volume principles from the water allocation plan under amendment.
Representativeness of Group	Meeting 1	Group agreement that a nomination should be sought from hardwood plantation forestry for representation on the Stakeholder Advisory Group.