

**LOCH GARRY FUTURE SERVICE STRATEGY
COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP MEETING
MEETING MINUTES**

Minutes of Meeting No: 5

Date and Time: Wednesday 5 February 2025

Venue: Nathalia Sports and Community Centre

42 Robertson Street

NATHALIA VIC 3638

Attendees:

1. Claire Flanagan-Smith (RMCG) Independent Facilitator
2. Ellie Buchanan (RMCG)
3. Mathew Price
4. Nevil Hauffe
5. Colin Grinter
6. Stuart Grinter
7. John Pettigrew
8. Mackenzie Craig
9. Sally McPherson
10. Linton Ryan
11. Guy Tierney (Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority)
12. Rachel Gadd (Moira Shire Council)
13. Louise Mitchell (Greater Shepparton City Council)
14. John McCartney (Campaspe Shire Council)
15. Warren Blyth (Goulburn-Murray Water)
16. Greg Shannon (Goulburn-Murray Water)
17. Luke Dunham (Goulburn-Murray Water)
18. Steven Abbott (Goulburn-Murray Water)
19. Rhiannon Bradshaw (Goulburn-Murray Water)
20. Geoff Coburn (Goulburn-Murray Water)
21. Chloe Warburton (Goulburn-Murray Water)
22. Lochie Inglis (Water Technology)
23. Kim Chung (Water Technology)

Minute Taker: Nadine Francis (Goulburn Murray Water)

Apologies: Colin Gilby, Darren Grossmann (Goulburn-Murray Water)

1. **Welcome**

The meeting commenced at approximately 9:40am.

The meeting was opened, and all attendees were welcomed to the fifth meeting of the Community Reference Group (CRG). All attendees were thanked for their time and investment in the Future Service Strategy for Loch Garry.

2. **Introductions**

All participants introduced themselves.

The agenda for this meeting was explained.

3. **Purpose and reminder of meeting ground rules**

The purpose of the CRG was reiterated. It was expected that by the end of the meeting CRG will have agreed to a preferred recommended option for further analysis by Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW).

The facilitator noted 80% agreement was a standard deliberative engagement measure and that was the aim for the day.

All members were reminded of the values for these meetings

4. **Summary of CRG Meeting 4**

Actions from the previous meeting were discussed.

The scope of the project was recapped. These being:

- Loch Garry is 100 years old
- How can we set up for another 100 years into the future.
- An informed decision needs to be made
- Fairer and sustainable approach for all
- BAU is not a strategy for the future
- Flood model and infrastructure options, climate change, testing what recommendation means financially
- What are the benefits and who is impacted
- Consultation and community and customer input to the final decision.

All members were reminded of the current options

1B - Base & regulator upgrade & ownership of levees

1C - Base Case plus ownership Clarification

2A - Fairer Distribution of water – Downstream North and South

2B – Fairer Distribution of water plus agreed floodway and easement

2C - Fairer Distribution of water, plus water release upstream of Shepparton

3 - Decommission of Loch Garry and all levees

3A - Decommission Loch Garry with open regulator

3B - Decommission Loch Garry with closed regulator

5. **Review of updated flood modelling information**

Water Technology presented updated flood modelling undertaken since CRG meeting #4. Updates included:

- Updated design conditions with no breaches
- Further modelling for the fairer distribution of water. This was reviewed with and without an engineered floodway
- Intent to provide as close as possible to 50,000 megalitres of water per day onto the southern floodplain in the “fairer distribution” scenarios
- Timelapse animations

A member suggested wording around the Loch Garry effect on flood mitigation in particular the word “ineffective” is emotive and misleading. The member explained that the word “ineffective” gives the impression that it’s not working or not relevant.

Action: Water Technology to review language used on the Loch Garry Flood Mitigation presentation slide

Events varying in magnitude were presented including:

1. Goulburn River events up to a 1 in 100 year probability
2. Goulburn River depth maps
3. Time of inundation across the flood plain.

For the time inundation slides, it was noted once the depth hits 150mm, the clock starts on the inundation time and runs until it goes back below 150mm. If it is more than 24 hours at this depth (>150mm), damage to crops starts to occur. It was also explained that at 9.5m depth, water stays in the channel with some minor flooding in the northern flood plain.

An observation is made that this data does not reflect the previous flood map shown and that the previous map showed that most of the water was in the southern flood plain. It is advised that this table is looking at flood rates under natural conditions.

An animation of the 2022 floods is presented under existing conditions, including levee breaches. Discussion was held between the landowners and the representative from Water Technology.

A flow distribution between northern and southern flood plains were presented. This shows what each option means for flow distribution.

It was questioned whether there would be a flat fee across everyone or tiered structure depending on your protection level. It was advised we are not at this stage yet, but it is a possible outcome.

6. **Review Options Analysis Information**

The following was presented:

- Increasing revenue base – There are powers available for GMW or other agencies to raise revenue for flood protections schemes, including if they are expanded. To apply powers a clear identification of beneficiaries, political support and community backing are key issues.
- Ownership of levees – GMW owns Loch Garry and some levees along the lower Goulburn, but it has not been determined who legally owns the remainder of the levees. If options 2 & 3 are considered, ownership of the levees needs to be determined. Easements is an option to look at who owns the levees; information related to the State Rivers and other agencies roles and involvement in the levees is still being sought.
- Engineering High Level Cost – A request is in for an engineering company to look at scope for all options. The cost of a mass concrete structure is unavailable currently. A very preliminary estimate by GMW is provided by extrapolating information related to current replacement of a regulator in the west of GMID The estimate of cost of elec/mech is approx. \$5M. There is an option to do no civil works and put in \$5M worth of gates but given the condition of the structure is not recommended. Instead, an allowance for \$5 million for

structure rehabilitation is prudent and could extend its life by 50 years, matching that estimated for the gates. Alternatively, a preliminary estimate for replacement with a new gated regulator is \$20M.

- Financial Analysis – GMW provided indicative price estimates, assuming straight-line depreciation and a 4% (real) interest rate. More detailed price modelling, tariffs analysis and capital funding options analysis would need to be undertaken in future.

Several questions were raised around costs, co-funding, depreciation and decreases of costs if funding were given. Members were reminded that we are not yet at this stage and the focus is on the preferred options at this point

- Environmental/Ecological Analysis – It is explained that generally the more flood plain that is inundated, the more likely it is to see a more diverse and richer ecosystem. This may not only be restricted to the public domain, but also the landowner may benefit from this. Some of the benefits suggested were soil moisture, soil carbon, pest control, carbon sequestration and amenity.

It was questioned whether there has been any discussion with indigenous groups. It was advised that as part of the approvals process, a cultural assessment would be undertaken

- Economic Assessment – An economic assessment has not been commenced. It was advised that better understanding of farm economics needs to be considered. A Business case needs to be made that shows private and public benefits. It was questioned who would be involved in the analysis for the Business Case GMW would undertake the analysis with external support.

7. **Review Assessment Criteria and Confirm Rating**

The members were reminded of the assessment criteria (Safety, Equity, Practicality, Legality, Financial, Acceptance and Environment). and were asked in groups of 2-3 to give a rating of 1-3 (most important to least important).

All groups reported back their assessment, and discussions were held around the results.

8. **Assessment of Options Against Selection Criteria and Analysis information**

The CRG members were questioned how they would like GMW and Council Representatives to act in the group sessions. The CRG advised they would like GMW and Council to be involved in discussions. The CRG members agreed they would be the only voters.

The CRG members and GMW were split into 3 groups to clarify the objectives of each of the options and then assess and rate the options against the criteria. The CRG members rotated so that each provided input to each option.

Options that were considered are 1B (Base Cas plus Regulator Upgrade, 1C (Base Case plus ownership Clarification), 2A (Fairer Distribution of water – Downstream North and South with releases to the South limited to those needed to protect the levees, 3 (Decommission of Loch Garry and all levees), 3A (Decommission Loch Garry with open regulator) and 3B (Decommission Loch Garry with closed regulator).

9. **Review options for recommendations**

CRG members were given two votes and asked to select their two preferred options. Each CRG member informed the facilitator of their votes.

Options were reviewed and members voted as follows

Option 1B – 0 votes

Option 1C - 3 votes

Option 2A – 8 votes (unanimous decision)

Option 3 – 4 votes

Option 3A – 1 vote

Option 3B – 0 votes

Some members noted confusion around option 1B and 1C. After discussion, it was agreed that for the purpose of voting that 1C be defined as option 1B **plus** levee ownership clarification. On this basis, members who voted for 1B were given the option to change their vote to 1C, which all did.

The CRG were congratulated for reaching a preferred option. GMW informed the CRG that analysis would be undertaken on options 2A, 3 and 1C.

GMW informed the CRG the intent is to return to the group in March with a completed analysis of these options.

The meeting concluded at 3.35pm

Meeting Action List

Meeting Number	Item Number	Content and Description	Action Outcome	Responsible	Due Date	Status
1	3	Detailed Terms of Reference for the proposed Flood Study to be provided at next meeting		Guy Tierney (GBCMA)		in progress
1	3	Campaspe Shire Council be invited to join CRG	Invited and represented	RMCG		completed
1	3	List of Recommendations from Loch Garry Reference Committee be included in papers		Rhiannon Bradshaw (GMW)		completed
1	4	Amended paragraph 2 in relation to Confidentiality to add the word "confidential" be added between the words "all" and "documents".	Amended	Rhiannon Bradshaw (GMW)		completed
1	4	Conflict of Interest Register		Rhiannon Bradshaw (GMW)		completed
1	5	Modelling to be provided to assist with informing CRG	See below links provided	Guy Tierney (GBCMA)		completed
3	8	Future consideration required for flood mitigation upstream of Shepparton	This option not modelled by Water Technology	Guy Tierney (GBCMA)		completed
4	3	Rund the major flood events without levee breaches for comparison		Lachlan Inglis (Water Technology)		completed
4	4	Review possibility of producing timelapse showing depth and duration		Lachlan Inglis (Water Technology)		completed
4	4	Updates slides showing depths and changes for clarity		Lachlan Inglis (Water Technology)		completed

5	5	Water Technology to update the language of the Loch Garry Flood Mitigation slide		Lochlan Inglis (Water Technology)		In progress
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Rural Levee Assessment link from the GBCMA publication page:

[Rural Levee Assessment Report.pdf \(gbcma.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/publications/published_documents/floodplain#Lower%20Goulburn%20Floodplain%20Rehabilitation%20Scheme)

Also, a further 11 reference documents can be found under Lower Goulburn tab:

https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/publications/published_documents/floodplain#Lower%20Goulburn%20Floodplain%20Rehabilitation%20Scheme