

THIRD ROUND CONSULTATION – ISSUES ARISING

[This note records issues identified, and views expressed, by stakeholders present at the meeting. The Authority is yet to form any opinion on these issues and views. As appropriate, issues will be addressed in the Authority's reports].

Scheme: Maranoa River WSS

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Water Availability

- The system is not working. Income from sources other than irrigation is keeping irrigators afloat. Water is not guaranteed.
- Water is not available all year round which makes it too difficult to get a crop in.
- Last year was the first crop in three years.
- The scheme cannot remain as it is now. Water harvesting arrangements, compared to the existing supplemented water allocation, may make more sense. The money that can be extracted from the properties cannot meet the costs incurred by SunWater. This is not an irrigation system.
- The best year an irrigator has ever had was revenue of \$30,000 before costs, \$15,000 after costs.
- When the entitlement was originally purchased, irrigators didn't know that the water entitlement was difficult to surrender and that the irrigator was locked into this entitlement. Irrigators report that it wouldn't be a problem in a scheme where the water is worth something.
- Only 1 irrigator is taking water at the moment due to the low reliability of the scheme.
- Irrigators report that something has to be done. Previous enquiries with the Water Reform Unit in 2005-06 regarding these issues were not successful.

Water harvesting as an alternative to supplemented water charges

- Irrigators sent a letter to Minister Jones and, as a result, the enforcement of bills was suspended by SunWater. Invoices have been continued, but a covering letter from SunWater explains payment will not be enforced.
- Irrigators resolved to contact DERM to further explore water harvesting arrangements as an alternative to SunWater's existing supplemented water scheme.

- SunWater report that at the moment a briefing note is before the Board of SunWater outlining several detailed options to the challenges facing Neil Turner Weir, so it is not a simple matter.

Opex

- The town should help contribute to the costs of the weir as the primary purpose that the weir serves is fishing and caravan parking.
- The local council should take ownership of the weir and recover costs through rates.
- Local operators are already involved in the maintenance of the weir. Aboriginal corporation has also done the mowing etc. Council has caulked the weir and cleared the timber.

Other

- Water is disappearing quicker than previously. The water is rapidly leaking/evaporating. The water level in the weir fell 3 feet in a month.
- Nobody has dredged the silt out of the weir in 4 or 5 years despite SunWater providing a permit to a contractor.
- Sediment build up has reduced the storage capacity of the weir, large flows of water has brought in large amounts of sand, which further reduces capacity. Cases where the weir is completely dry are becoming more and more common.