



## **CWMS Sub-Committee meeting**

### **DRAFT MINUTES**

**23 May 2019**

**Clare**

#### **1. Welcome, introductions and apologies**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Present        | Andrew Cole (Chair)<br>Lee Wallis<br>Wayne Hart<br>Paul Chapman (Project Officer)       |
| Apologies from | Gary Easthope<br>Adam Broadbent<br>Simon Millcock<br>and subsequently from Chris Parish |

#### **2. Previous Minutes**

The Chair moved that the previous minutes be accepted, and this was agreed.

#### **3. 2019 Conference – discussion held over until after Item 4**

#### **4. Review of SA Water Industry Act**

Paul outlined the briefing paper and indicated the five issues it raised under the rubik of 'levelling the playing field'. The Chair noted that time was short but thought a response was appropriate. Andrew and Lee both made the point that Councils operate in a different playing field and that levelling was inappropriate.

It was recognized that ratepayers would prefer Council to own and operate CWMS and that led to a broad discussion about how private and Council ownership and operation differ. This is in contrast to the view among regulators that it is better for them to be blind to the owner of the Schemes.

For example, the provisions of the Local Government Act make a difference and Andrew alluded to Section 125 which required that any surpluses from CWMS charging be used only for CWMS upkeep and replacement (a private operator can extract profits). It was also pointed out that Councils used treated waste water for community benefit. That also led to a discussion about how ESCOSA allow for wastewater disposal charging.

***It was agreed*** that Paul would prepare a short response to the Review, raising issues to be addressed by regulators who would be invited to the next Committee meeting and to the up-coming Conference (please see the discussion below).

## **2019 Conference**

Paul outlined the planning, against the draft flyer which had been circulated.

Regarding the first session (which seeks to describe and help benchmark SA CWMS), the Committee thought that the expansion plans of Mt Barker were not closely relevant and should not be made a focus, so that presentation was to be limited in time.

Regarding the second session on regulation, it was determined to change the theme to have the regulators address the question of how private operators and Councils are different. It was agreed that the regulators be invited to address this particular issue in the context of the single licence regime and the desire among regulators to set a level playing field. This issue would be raised as part of the briefing paper Paul is to circulate. It was stressed that we did not want to ambush the regulators.

There was some discussion of the fourth item, being that of technology. It is crucial that the Conference maintain relevance to the CWMS typical of Legatus Councils.

This led to a further discussion about ensuring the Conference was useful for practitioners. In particular, it should encourage CEOs to attend but put less emphasis on elected members and Mayors.

## **5. Reducing reporting resource requirements**

Starting with the briefing paper, the Committee agreed with the view that while OTR's SRMTMPlans were onerous to do the first time, they constitute a useful documentation process. The major issues were overlap in reporting and the detail deemed necessary (it was stated that some of the reporting was beyond the review capabilities of some regulators).

It was agreed that the best way to progress this issue was direct contact with the regulators. They would be invited to the 2019 Conference to address the issue of how Councils might be different from private CWMS owner/operators. In addition, the regulators would be invited to the next Committee meeting to address issues of overlap and unneeded detail and the prospect of a single, annual report to all SA government regulators.

The Chair asked Paul to prepare a very short paper for the agencies addressing both invitations, to be circulated among members as soon as possible and then a final version forwarded to the regulators.

## **6. Regional sludge project**

Harsha updated the Committee on progress with the project as a step leading up to her interim report in early July. Most Councils had provided information but not all the details.

In particular, Harsha had not received estimates of the quantity of sludge generated and had instead estimated the amount from all reporting Councils as 2300m<sup>3</sup> pa. Ensuing discussions indicated that not all of that could be aggregated because distances were too great and that led to agreement that the Schemes be mapped, or at least their geographical separations be better understood.

Harsha also noted that the quality characteristics of the residential wastewater sludge were unknown and that SA Water's response is to require dredged sludge to be held for 3 years before being used. This contrasted with Councils' procedures, even though they are authorised under the Health Act.

Among the solutions Harsha was examining was the idea of combining the wastewater and green waste streams, so that the biological processes of both are enhanced and the volume of material reaches the scale required for a processing plant to be viable.

#### **7. Some feedback on TAFE course**

The discussion contrasted with some of the views expressed by interviewed participants in the course. In particular, the fact that the course contained more than CWMS and included full sewerage systems was seen to be a plus. It was agreed to leave the course evaluation to the students involved.

#### **8. Any other business**

Wayne made the point that the Committee seemed to be making things happen and that there was a pressing need to engage with and update CEOs.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am

***Next meeting Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July***