

Gellibrand River FLOWS Study - Project Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Acknowledgement of Country

We proudly acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land and waterways within the Gellibrand River catchment, the Gadubanud Peoples of the Eastern Maar, the First Peoples of this land who have managed and cared for this place for tens of thousands of years and continue to do so. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and future.

We acknowledge Eastern Maar and the surrounding Country. We thank all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for working with us on this project and sharing their wisdom and culture.

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Background

Barwon Water in collaboration with CCMA, DEECA, Southern Rural Water and Wannon Water have recently engaged Alluvium to undertake a FLOWS Study of the Gellibrand River and estuary.

The FLOWS method is Victoria's statewide approach for determining environmental water requirements of rivers and plays a key role in informing environmental entitlements, passing flows and understanding the amount of water available in addition to the cap set on the maximum amount of water that can be taken from a water source or area. The FLOWS recommendation can also play an integral role in integrated waterway management planning.

This project will help us understand how much water the Gellibrand River requires to maintain river health and account for any changes in the catchment or new knowledge that has been gained since the development of the existing flow recommendations.

Purpose of the Project Advisory Group

The Project Advisory Group will provide input and feedback throughout the design and development of the FLOWS Study. This group will provide a source of local knowledge and insight into community values and expectations for future river health that can feed into the FLOWS process.

Membership

The Project Advisory Group will consist of up to 20 community members, consisting of nominated representatives from:

- Residents and landowners
- Business and industry
- Environmental groups
- Community groups
- Farmers
- General community

Attributes sought

- ability to respect a range of views
- ability to work constructively and collaboratively as a group member
- ability to take a balanced view and have a pragmatic approach to solving issues
- an active interest in local environmental issues, and in the health and management of the land and waterways

- live in or in close proximity to the Gellibrand River or its tributaries – or spend a considerable amount of time visiting the Gellibrand catchment, and participating in community life
- strong community networks to ensure the views of the broader community are represented and / or be in a position to represent the views of a key stakeholder or user group

Responsibilities of members

- review agendas, scientific reports and other material, as required, prior to meetings
- actively participate in and contribute to discussions during meetings
- ability to commit to the advisory group for the required duration, be prepared to contribute during meetings and attend each meeting where practicable act in accordance with the Terms of Reference
- share information and outcomes about the project with their representing groups while always refraining from disclosing confidential information.

Code of Conduct

- declare any conflict of interest
- contribute to a candid and respectful atmosphere where issues and ideas can be tested
- be able to communicate productively and respectfully with other members of the group
- where appropriate, ensure the confidentiality of information

Opportunities for new members

During the life of the advisory group and at the discretion of the parties, the membership of the group may be expanded to include representation from any groups / sectors not represented in the original membership.

Role of Barwon Water

- act as a facilitator and provide the group with administrative support
- provide members with appropriate and relevant information
- respond to members' requests for information that are relevant to the role of the group
- provide the feedback from the Project Advisory Group to Alluvium for consideration as part of the FLOWS Study

Meetings – frequency and timing

The Project Advisory Group is anticipated to meet 4-5 times between February 2025 and December 2025. Meetings will be held online, face-to-face, or a mixture of both, subject to the group's preferences and availability.

Barwon Water will seek agreement from the group on any additional meetings, and members would be given at least two weeks' notice. A meeting schedule will be discussed during the first Project Advisory Group meeting.

Agendas

The agenda will be prepared by Barwon Water and/or our consultants and circulated to members one week before each meeting. Agenda items will be given priority, but there will be opportunities to raise general business.

Minutes will be taken at each meeting and distributed to members within three weeks of a meeting taking place.

Termination Criteria

A member's position will be terminated if one of the following scenarios apply:

- a member resigns in writing to Barwon Water
- a member becomes an employee of Barwon Water, CCMA, DEECA, Southern Rural Water or Wannon Water
- a member is convicted in Victoria of an offence which is punishable by penal servitude or imprisonment for 12 months or more or is convicted elsewhere than Victoria of an offence that, if committed in Victoria, would be an offence so punishable
- a member releases confidential information pertinent to the group without first obtaining permission to do so by Barwon Water
- a member does not adhere to responsibilities outlined above

If an individual representing a group wishes to resign, a new individual may be nominated by the group to take their place. Where the group has a president, CEO, or similar, representatives are to be elected by the office bearer.

Contact details

Barwon Water Community Engagement team

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