MEETING AGENDA

CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP (CCAG)	
Date	**Monday 24 March 2025**
Time	9.30am to 12noon
Location	**In Person:** Hunter Water Head Office, 36 Honeysuckle Dr, Newcastle NSW 2300 **Online:** Via MS Teams (link in calendar invite)

Purpose	Consistent with its Charter, the Customer and Community Advisory Group (CCAG) provides advice on the interests of customers and consumers of Hunter Water, the Customer Contract and other key issues related to Hunter Water's planning and operations.

AGENDA TOPICS

1	**Arrival at Hunter Water** Please sign in at front desk	9.15 – 9.30 am
2	**Meeting open:**	
	1. Chair's welcome & Acknowledgement of Country 2. Apologies 3. Disclosure and management of actual/perceived conflicts of interest regarding agenda items 4. Minutes: Adoption of November 2024 meeting minutes.	9.30 – 9.35 am

3	**Operational update:**	
3.1	**Operational update** • Darren Cleary – Managing Director, Hunter Water - Desalination plant construction commencement and new pathway - Williams River rehabilitation update - January storms response - NSW Parliament PFAS inquiry - Love Water grants - Stormwater murals	9:35 – 10:00
4	**Strategic Presentations:**	
4.1	**Future customer and stakeholder engagement committees** • Declan Clausen – Group Manager, Strategy and External Affairs • Laura Boland – Stakeholder and Government Relations Advisor The Customer and Community Advisory Group (CCAG) is Hunter Water's longest-standing stakeholder and customer forum, originally established to meet the requirements of our previous operating licence. As part of our 2025-2030 pricing proposal, Hunter Water will also be establishing a new Community Committee to mark Hunter Water's 'report card'. To ensure the complementary functioning of both groups, the CCAG will undergo a refresh in the 2025/26 financial year. This presentation will discuss proposed updates to the CCAG charter and its functions, alongside the introduction of the new Community Committee.	10:00 – 10:45
	Morning tea break	*10:45 – 11:00 am*
4.2	**Hunter Water's community engagement update** • Renee Fedder – Group Manager Communication and Engagement The communication and engagement team will discuss insights from Hunter Water's recent community engagement events and education programs.	11:00 – 11:15
4.3	**National Performance Report 2025** • Michael Steel – Treasury Analyst The National Performance Report (NPR) is an annual performance monitor of Australian water utilities published by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM). The BoM published Part A of the 2023-24 NPR on 17 March 2025, providing commentary on trends and year-on-year movements for key performance indicators. Hunter Water uses the NPR to monitor our performance over time, identify potential strengths and areas for improvement, and to	11:15 – 11:35

	benchmark relative performance against other utilities. This presentation summarises Hunter Water's trend and benchmarked performance against key indicators.	
5	**General business and discussions of questions on notice** Questions on notice received during the November 2024 meeting are included below.	11:35 – 12:00
6	**Next meeting and meeting close** Next meeting TBC Q4 2025	**By 12 noon**

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions from CCAG's November 2024 meeting:

Q: Members asked to know the costs of solar panels at the Belmont Desalination Plant.

A: Hunter Water is committed to reducing the environmental impact of the Belmont Desalination Plant. As a condition of consent for the state significant planning approval, Hunter Water is required to operate the plant by making use of renewable energy. We are exploring options to purchase renewable energy for the plant via a Power Purchase Agreement, and through onsite solar generation.

The estimated costs of building onsite solar are likely to be in the order of approximately $2.5 million at this stage for a ~1-1.2MW system on site. A more-detailed site-specific cost estimate will be prepared once the final available area, and therefore final solar PV capacity, is known.

The Belmont Desalination Plant is a $530 million investment in our region's water security, providing up to 30 million litres per day of rainfall independent water, around 15% of the region's average daily water needs.

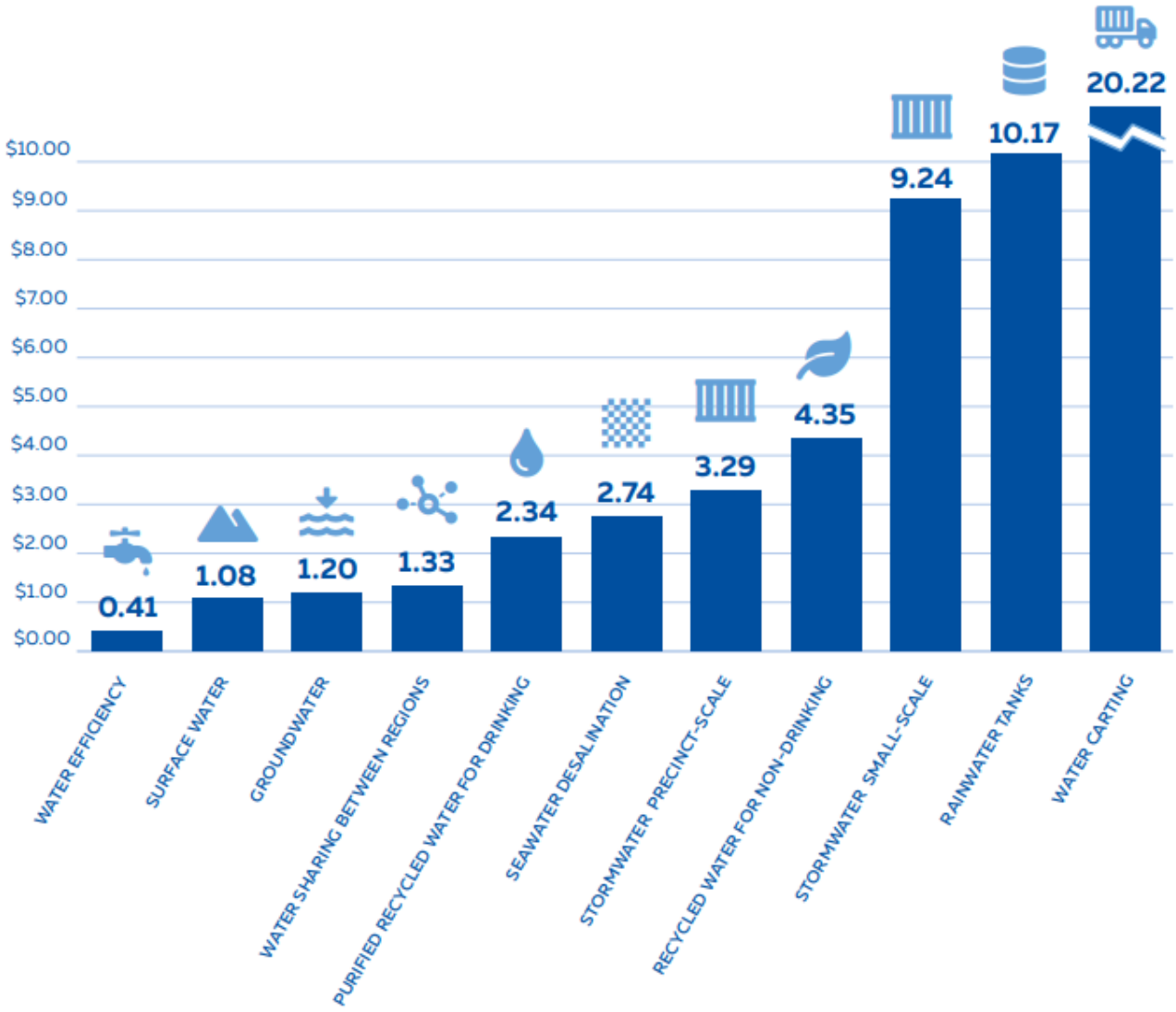
Q: Members asked if dam water and desalination water incur different pricing.

A: All water is priced the same for customer bills. However, Hunter Water's own costs vary depending on the source of water being delivered, environmental conditions, location of delivery and the costs and benefits associated with the various assets. These costs and benefits can vary over time.

Hunter Water undertook an extensive cost benefit analysis for a range of potential portfolios of water sources in the Lower Hunter Water Security Plan. The analysis considered the reliability of the water sources through drought, and thus their contribution to avoiding the societal costs of time spent in water restrictions. This was considered alongside economic costs and benefits, and environmental costs and benefits.

The Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) has undertaken extensive analysis to understand the levelised cost per kilolitre of different water sources. This is only one lens to consider, given that not all water sources are available in all locations, and not all water sources produce reliable supply during periods of drought. See full report on the WSAA website, and relevant graph below:

FIGURE 1 Costs of water supply options included in WSAA study LEVELISED $/KL 2019-20



Q: Members queried the cost of the solar energy installation that was recently put into use at the Balickera pumping station, and whether a development application was placed on public display.

A: Total cost of approximately $6.5 million including design, procurement, construction and commissioning, as well as reestablishment of the public park, offset planting and visual screen planting.

The project was assessed and approved under Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* via a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) where Hunter Water Corporation is a determining authority.

Q: Members queried how much land clearing was done to accommodate the solar installation.

A: Approximately 70 mature trees were removed from the existing public park area, the logs from which were reused for habitat restoration on a nearby environmental restoration site in Karuah, and the remaining vegetation was mulched and reused onsite to support the more than 3,000 native trees,

shrubs and ground cover plants that have been established as visual screen planting, offset planting, and within newly created garden areas in the reestablished park.

The Review of Environmental Factors for the solar installation (2021) states:

> The proposal would result in the removal of about 0.9 hectares of mature remnant native trees including Eucalypt and Melaleuca species. No listed threatened flora or endangered ecological communities would be impacted. The vegetation to be removed would include about ten *Eucalyptus* moluccana (Grey Box) trees that form part of observed foraging habitat for the Little Lorikeet, a BC Act listed threatened species. A 5-part test (assessment of significance) was carried out for this species and concluded that the proposal is unlikely to result in a significant impact on this species. No EPBC Act listed threatened species or communities were observed or considered likely to occur at the proposal site.

Figure above: Aerial photos before (2022) and after construction (2023) of the Balickera solar energy project (Images via Google Earth)

FORWARD CALENDAR

Our next meeting of the CCAG will be Tuesday 17 June 2025. This will be the final meeting of the CCAG in its current form, before the transition to the Stakeholder Advisory Forum (SAF) in 2025/26.