



MEETING AGENDA

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY FORUM (SAF)

Date	Tuesday 16 June 2026
Time	9.30am to 12-noon
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 Stakeholder Advisory Forum (SAF) provides independent, representative advice from a cross-section of Hunter Water's stakeholders on matters relating to strategy, planning, operations and the Customer Contract.
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AGENDA TOPICS

1	Arrival at Hunter Water Please sign in at front desk	9.15 to 9.30 am
2	Meeting open:	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Chair's welcome & Acknowledgement of Country2. Apologies3. Disclosure and management of actual/perceived conflicts of interest regarding agenda items.	9.30 to 9.35 am
4	Operational update:	
4.1	Welcome and operational updates Purpose: to inform the SAF of recent operational updates Presenter: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jennifer Hayes – Managing Director, Hunter Water Operational updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Drought response- Grahamstown Dam and Finnan Park playground- Launch of our Cultural Protocol Guideline	9:35 to 10:00

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mural at Arcadia Vale - Progress at the Belmont Desalination Plant 	
	<p>Drought preparedness for community and business</p> <p>Purpose: inform the SAF about drought preparation activities and decisions</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colin Hancock – Group Manager Water Resilience and Science • Clara Laydon – Program Lead • Ardie Morris – Manager Business Customer Operations <p>Hunter Water has been preparing to implement water restrictions when storages reach 60%. With recent rains in the catchment, our storages have recovered for the time being. However, we are still preparing for the next drought.</p> <p>This session will inform SAF about drought response, and what water restrictions mean for community, businesses and industry.</p>	10:00 to 10:40
	<p>Morning tea break</p>	10:40 to 10:55
	<p>Rebates for service disruptions</p> <p>Purpose: consult – we are seeking the SAF’s input to inform options to be considered in our decision making on rebates for service disruption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emma Turner, Senior Economist <p>Hunter Water provides a range of rebates to customers affected by service disruptions, such as overflows or outages. This session will seek SAF’s views on the proposed changes to these rebates to inform the review of Hunter Water’s Operating Licence.</p>	10:55 to 11:15
	<p>Hunter Water growth update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matt Hingston – Executive Manager Customer Services • Luke Bianchi – Manager Water Planning • Rajesh Khadka – Engineer <p>Purpose: inform the SAF about growth, including how Hunter Water’s growth plan is developed each year.</p> <p>Hunter Water supports growth across the Lower Hunter Region. The purpose of this discussion is to share Hunter Water’s approach to growth, including the Growth Plan.</p> <p>The Growth Plan is Hunter Water’s annual forecast of future development across the Lower Hunter, used to inform infrastructure planning and investment priorities.</p> <p>Following interest from SAF members, the presentation will discuss key inputs that inform how the growth plan is developed and updated each year, and an overview of the key areas of growth across the Lower Hunter.</p>	11:15 to 11:45
5	<p>General business and discussions of questions on notice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SAF survey results (Laura Boland – Hunter Water) - Questions on notice received (below). - Further opportunity to raise any questions or future topics of discussion. 	11:45 to 12:00

6	<p>Meeting close</p> <p>Next meeting June 2026 (date TBC)</p>	By 12 noon
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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Q: Members asked about Hunter Water’s role in catchment management of the Paterson River and involvement with Environmental Water Advisory Group (EWAG).

A: Environmental Water Advisory Groups (EWAGs) are administered by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) to provide a forum for stakeholders to share local knowledge, and inform the planning and delivery of environmental water. Hunter Water is not currently involved in the development of any formal EWAG for the Paterson River.

We do, however, continue to work with a range of partners on catchment management activities and are open to opportunities for collaboration where they align with our priorities.

Regarding the management of carp in the Paterson, we have previously offered support for community-led carp management activities, recognising their potential benefits for river health, and we continue to explore opportunities in this area. One such carp management event is planned for September 2026, after it was rescheduled from earlier in the year.

The 4 Valleys Program is Hunter Water’s primary catchment management initiative for engaging rural landholders and is delivered in partnership with Local Land Services. The initiative supports landholders in the Paterson, Allyn, Williams and Chichester catchments to adopt sustainable farming and land management practices that help safeguard water quality and environmental values, while improving farm productivity and profitability.

Hunter Water takes a targeted, outcomes-focused approach to delivering on-ground activities under the 4 Valleys Program. Projects are assessed on their merits, with a strong focus on priority areas upstream of drinking water supply offtakes, where actions can deliver the greatest benefit to water quality.

In the Paterson River catchment, this work is currently focused on land above the offtakes at Gresford (Paterson River) and East Gresford (Allyn River). Delivery is primarily through voluntary landholder engagement programs, with numerous projects supported in recent years in the Allyn River catchment (the main tributary of the Paterson River).

Other catchment management activities, such as community/landowner engagement and education, are conducted more broadly in recognition that the knowledge can be transferred and implemented.

Q: Members asked if any seaweed collected at the Belmont Desalination Plant could be used for other purposes, such as agricultural applications.

A: Seaweed will not be actively harvested at the Belmont Desalination Plant during the construction works or eventual operation of the plant. While screens will be in place at the ocean inlet to remove any seaweed entering the inlet, the volumes of seaweed are expected to be very small. Based on observations at other desalination plants, the quantities of seaweed collected this way would not be sufficient for any practical use, including agricultural applications.

