

## Re: Bilateral Agreement progress report [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

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**From:** Andrew Brown  
**To:** Danielle Baker  
**Cc:** Peter Hyde Richard Beecham

**Date:** Mon, 03 Jun 2019 22:55:12 +0000

**Attachments** Unnamed Attachment (68 bytes)

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Hi Danielle

There is a joint list at

<https://nswwwmmi.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/BSU/pages/778797340/31+May+2019+Progress+Snapshot>

I met with Pradeep and Sohail yesterday afternoon to work through a shared understanding (briefing Pradeep in many ways)

I'm talking with Peter tomorrow morning at 10am to bring him up on the details, and we have pencilled in Friday at 1:30pm to have a few hours with the MDBA folk.

There are a set of policy questions flagged for resolution/escalation, but most of the outstanding stuff is MDBA asking for documentation we don't have.

From the discussion yesterday, it appears that MDBA was hopeful that if they asked often enough and loudly enough we would employ consultants to write the documentation they were seeking. We discussed that this wasn't actually a solution because the consultant will still just come and ask somebody "what did you change and why" and in most of the cases we don't actually know anymore because the person who did the work has left, or its just too long ago and they don't remember.

MDBA appears to be strongly motivated by wishing to cover their rears against people questioning why the BDL (and hence SDL) has changed and the solution they are going for is asking for extensive documentation.

In this brave new post-basin plan world, Richard and I have been ramping up our demands that things are documented and that is going pretty well I think, but it still leaves us with a bunch of legacy issues from the period after the WSP (circa 2000) and prior to BDL (2009-2012-ish) in which senior modellers would use their best judgement to make model refinements and small calibrations to fix issues they came across and generally improve things, and typically without a lot of effort being applied to recording in detail where that info came from and a lot of specifics about why they were changing things.

Part of Richard's thinking with the model reviews was to draw a line under that period and effectively have a stocktake going into Basin Plan work, but even that hasn't fully put the egg back together and this whole BDL exercise is a reflection of that deficit.

Andrew

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On Mon, Jun 3, 2019 at 1:21 PM Danielle Baker

wrote:

Thanks for the update,

I've met with Pradeep a few times recently for other matters. I haven't been progressing surface water models acceptance with him, as Peter and Andrew have been coordinating this. It is a good idea to plan and progress through the workload, checking in regularly on actions and progress and I'm glad there are model workshops tentative booked in for each resource.

I've also not spoken with MDBA regarding FPH SDL monitoring and would like to have an agreed modelled approach, noting it could be multiple years before all take is logged and reported.

Peter,

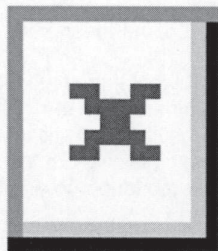
Please include me in the model meeting with MDBA this Friday. We can plan my level of involvement following that.

Thanks

Danielle

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On Sun, 2 Jun 2019 at 08:05, Rachel Connell wrote:

D, D & D - FYI

Cheers Rachel

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Peta Derham**

Date: Fri, 31 May 2019 at 18:47

Subject: Bilateral Agreement progress report [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

To: Rachel Connell

Cc: Marcus Finn

Vanessa O'Keefe

Hi Rachel

Our teams continue to work together on development of water resource plans. I have been told at this end that the Lachlan Alluvium plan is essentially complete, and the issues our teams have been working together on have been resolved. This is great news, and I think a testament to the hard work of both of our teams and their continued ability to work together even when the issues are thorny ones. If you could pass on my thanks to your staff that would be fantastic.

The second set of plans to be submitted include three surface water plans, and there a significant set of (quite challenging) issues to resolve on the pathway to their submission in October. I've become more alert to progress towards resolving some of these issues through reporting against the bilateral agreement.

Given the significance of some of these, and the timing of plans they relate to, I would like to work with you to provide some executive oversight and monitoring of progress. This could take the form as a standing item on our monthly joint agency executive meeting that you and I usually attend and is chaired by Phillip Glyde. Marcus, Vanessa and Peter typically attend and report to this meeting and will lead progress and solutions – but for some items it would be good to have the project leads report to make sure they are alert to timelines and tied into the processes around WRP delivery.

I think the key items that would be tracked include:

- Delivery of models and documentation (Danielle Baker and Pradeep Sharma)
  - o Baseline diversion limit models that update our understanding of how much was taken pre-Basin Plan, and subsequently define the SDLs
  - o WRP models that are used to calculate the annual permitted take each year that the SDLs are in effect
- Floodplain harvesting (Dan Connor and Audrey van Beusichem)
  - o The floodplain harvesting project now looks delayed to the point where the improved models and other information will not contribute to WRPs
  - o NSW WRPs will now need to include FPH management arrangements that are robust, acknowledge and reverse/manage growth, and support the finalisation of the reform
  - o This will not be a simple task
- Planned environmental water (Belinda Collingburn and Audrey van Beusichem)
  - o Most NSW plans will have at least some changes to PEW rules
  - o The demonstration that these changes do not reduce the protection to PEW is fundamental
  - o It will be closely scrutinised (and possibly tested legally via EDO), particularly in iconic systems like the Macquarie (i.e. RAMSAR marshes)
  - o A potentially easy piece of work in a collaborative environment; but could become a real barrier if not managed carefully

I've attached a couple of emails from the last week that show the significance of the issues (particularly FPH and modelling) and highlight the need for close exec involvement. I am confident that Marcus, Peter and Vanessa are very capably pushing through this, but my view is that our support can only help.

Also attached for you is our response against the 16 April 2019 report provided under the Bilateral Agreement. I will ask Marcus to work with Vanessa to agree on a report we can publish together, and one that I will share with Minister Littleproud.

Hopefully this email finds you well, and that you get to enjoy your weekend amongst all the work. I will ring you to discuss, but wanted to get your thoughts on this approach.

Regards

PJ

Dr Peta-Joanne Derham  
A/g Executive Director  
Water Resource Planning and Accounting Division

Murray-Darling Basin Authority

[www.mdba.gov.au](http://www.mdba.gov.au)



Australian Government



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