

## Adelaide River water advisory Committee: Meeting 6

Date: Tuesday 11 November 2025.

Attendance		
Initials	Name	Position and representation
Chair	Darryl Day	Independent chair
CL	Cherrian Luxton	Member, Community
CJ	Christine Jenner	Member, Aboriginal, community, environment
DC	David Ciaravolo	Member, Community, tourism, or recreation
DG	David Gray	Member, Agriculture, community
PS	Peter Shappert	Member, Agriculture, tourism, or recreation
PG	Phillip Goodman	Member, Aboriginal
TK	Tarizma Kenyon	Member, Aboriginal
Initials	Department (DLPE) staff and presenters	
NB	Nerida Beard	Executive Director, Water Resources
CH	Carly Hibble	A/Director, Water Management
CP	Chris Parker	Engagement Officer
TNT	Toni Thomson	Engagement Officer
AD	Amy Dysart	Executive Director, Special Projects
RM	Rod Marsh	Marsh.eco, Project Modelling and Analysis
Apologies		
Initials	Name	Position and representation
SP	Selena Perrett	Member, Aboriginal

## 1. Meeting opening and governance.

### 1.1 Welcome

Chair welcomed members, acknowledged country, and noted the relevance of Remembrance Day, which the Committee agreed to honour with a minute's silence at 11.00am.

### 1.2 Formalities

The Committee acknowledged the meeting purpose was for the Department to provide an update to the Committee on developing the water plan, water modelling, integrating cultural water values into the plan, and the Aboriginal Water Reserve for the proposed plan area.

The Committee noted meeting summaries for the previous meeting, as well as three out of session meetings which have been finalised and available online.

The Committee confirmed no new conflicts of interests had arisen since the previous meeting.

The Committee nominated a member to complete the meeting evaluation.

The Department provided an update on actions from the last meeting.

The Chair advised the Director Water Management – Phillipa Hunter had left the Department. Members noted Ms Hunters significant contributions to the Committee and planning process and expressed their appreciation.

### 1.3 and 2.1 Update on the planning process and Update on Technical Advisory Panel

The Department provided an update on the plan progress and revised timeframes, now projected to extend through 2026. The extended timeframe will enable closer alignment between the Technical Advisory Panel's ecohydrological risk assessment and the plan. Additional time will also enable additional water modelling to occur. The Department noted progress since the previous out of session meeting (September 2025), including progression of modelling approach from generic catchment-wide scenarios to understand catchment dynamics, to more targeted scenarios that better target likely impacts of take.

The Department also noted the significant progress and contribution of the Committee over the course of 2025.

#### Key summary points:

Members discussed the importance of communicating complex scientific findings in accessible language to ensure broader community understanding.

The Committee noted that increased recognition of uncertainty in the ecohydrological risk assessment and water modelling is a positive step for the Department.

The Committee discussed the Adelaide River Water plan as an opportunity to proactively and precautionarily forward plan, rather than reactively manage impacts as has occurred in some jurisdictions.

The Committee acknowledged, and sought recognition in the water plan, of the tension between adaptively refining the management arrangements over time as new information becomes available, and the need to make significant early infrastructure decisions from the Adelaide River Off-Stream Water Storage (AROWS) project.

## 2. Matters for noting and discussion.

### 2.2 Update on water modelling and analysis

Marsh.eco, Project Modelling and Analysis – a consultant engaged by the Department, provided a detailed presentation on modelling undertaken to consider how different extraction rules could affect both flow dynamics, and the operation of the AROWS. The presentation included an overview of the hydrological modelling process and how it can inform, but not ultimately direct policy decisions. The presentation indicated that rates of dam filling, pump rates, flow thresholds and climate all influence on environmental flows and the function and efficiency of dam operation. Marsh.eco highlighted that multiple factors might be relevant in determining what is ‘sustainable’ in the catchment, and that around 10% of change to flow features could be used as a benchmark (presumptive standard) to understand where impacts may be significant – citing Nature Conservatory, Richter et. al. 2011<sup>1</sup>

#### **Key summary points:**

The Committee discussed and queried the modelling of various extraction rate scenarios for the AROWS project, including the higher extraction rates infrequently compared with lower extraction rates used more frequently, and the different environmental effects these patterns may have. The Committee noted that this additional modelling demonstrates an evolution and refinement of the Departments scientific assessments for the plan.

The Committee recommended that this additional work would be provided to the Technical Advisory panel for consideration.

Discussion included the potential benefits of using alternative metrics (rather than volume) to understand what is suitable.

The Committee reaffirmed its advisory role to the Minister, noting that it must continue to highlight key challenges such as catchment flow variability, the long lead time for the AROWS project, and the need for adaptive planning.

Members also noted that modelling information was complex, and that they would need additional support to understand the key monitoring findings that inform the plan to advise to the Minister.

***The Committee observed 1 minutes silence to mark Remembrance Day at 11am.***

### 2.3 Update on development of water plan

The Department presented on proposed framework for the water plan, providing additional detail on the 3-document format and how the plan. The Department emphasised its ongoing commitment to transparency and stakeholder engagement as the plan progresses toward completion. The Department advised that an updated public version of the NLC report would be made available in due course.

#### **Key summary points:**

The Committee queried, and the Department confirmed that the TAP’s final report would be made publicly available and would consolidate findings that have evolved throughout the planning process, noting that some information has evolved as new data became available.

The Committee recommended that the Department give close consideration to the timing for release of the TAP report, noting that there may be benefits to releasing the findings early so that community response can be accounted for in the plan.

---

<sup>1</sup> Richter, B. (2012). A Presumptive Standard for Environmental Flow Protection. River Research and Applications. <https://doi.org/10.1002/RRA.1511>

## 2.4 and 2.5 NLC Cultural Values report and Implementation actions & Committee discussion

The Department delivered a paper and presentation about how the findings of the Northern Land Council (NLC) Cultural Values Report could be integrated into the water plan.

### Key summary points:

Members sought clarification on the methodology used by the NLC to identify cultural and spiritual values associated with water and how these findings would be reflected in the plan's management framework.

The Chair advised that an out-of-session meeting with Traditional Owners would be held the following day to further discuss the proposed approach to incorporating cultural values into the plan.

The Committee highlighted the importance of closing the communication loop by providing feedback to those who participated in the NLC project, ensuring they are informed of how their contributions have been used. The Department confirmed that it could also attend the Aboriginal Ranger Committee meeting early in the new year to report on progress and maintain engagement with Indigenous stakeholders.

The Committee encouraged the Department to undertake Aboriginal Water Reserve and/or cultural values report sessions with Aboriginal members.

## 2.6 Aboriginal Water Reserve (AWR)

The Department presented on the Aboriginal Water Reserve, a specific volume water set aside in water allocation plans for the economic benefit of Aboriginal people. The Department discussed eligibility criteria and the process undertaken to identify eligible land for the Adelaide River Plan. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) provided a short overview of a project they have commenced with the Office of Water security to activate the reserve through Indigenous on-country development studies in the NT. The study will aim to develop a 'prospectus' which participating Aboriginal groups can use to discuss economic development opportunities for their land.

### Key summary points

The Committee queried how the Aboriginal water reserve would work if the plan adopted a dynamic, or non-volumetric Estimated Sustainable Yield (ESY). The considerations for the ESY will include mechanism for establishing the Aboriginal water reserve. AROWS was discussed as a piece of infrastructure with the ability to support Aboriginal economic development, but that coordination and additional work would be required to achieve this.

Members queried how CSIRO may choose groups to participate in their project, CSIRO indicated that they were open to discussing circumstances of individual groups.

## 2.7 Other business

The next formal meeting of the Committee was confirmed being 10 & 11 March 2026

The Committee discussed the importance of recognising climate change as a key factor influencing water resource management. Members noted that shifts in rainfall patterns, temperature, and evaporation rates are likely to affect hydrological data and long-term water availability.

The Committee requested that the Department undertake direct engagement with Aboriginal members of the Committee, or community members, in relation to the Cultural Values report.

The Committee recommended that 1-1 consultations with individual members on topics of particular interest or relevance before meetings would be useful in the future.

The Committee requested an update in early February about timeframes and next steps for the plan.

The Committee provided positive feedback on the progress of the plan, in particular the Department progression to a more dynamic approach to modelling and managing the resource.

**Meeting closed at 2.50 pm**