

Lockyer Valley Somerset Water Collaborative

2018-19 Review

The Lockyer Valley & Somerset Water Collaborative (LVSWC) was established in April 2018 to ensure a shared position on future water security, supply and management for all water users and the communities of the region. It came together to jointly identify and promote sustainable proposals to be ring new secure water resources to the region for the benefit of industry and the communities that live and work in it.

By any measure the LVSWC has been successful in achieving its purpose and priorities.

Members of the Collaborative initially set and contributed to a budget allowing for the appointment of an independent Chair and for operating costs to be met.

The Collaborative has been able to engage with both State and Federal Governments using the Feasibility Study completed in late 2018 to communicate both the limitations to ongoing economic growth and industry development from insecure and highly variable access to water resources and also the opportunities to bring new supplies to the region.

It has been this advocacy that resulted in the Collaborative being successful in securing \$1.4m in funding from the Dept of State Development etc for the development of a robust and detailed business case based on the recommendations detailed in the Feasibility Study.

The LVSWC has received the financial and in-kind sponsorship of the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy to progress our initiative through the Queensland Government's Building Queensland Infrastructure Framework. This reflects both the scale of the projects under consideration and the recognition by Government of the importance of water security to the Region.

The importance of DNRME's sponsorship has been a significant milestone and achievement as it has enabled the engagement of specialist consultants (Jacobs) to undertake wide-ranging consultations with the Region's horticultural industry including individual growers as part of the development of the Strategic Business Case.

Jacobs also hosted Investment Logic Workshops to ensure the Collaborative was closely and regularly engaged in the process. This process ensured the widest possible consideration of new water resource options were identified, considered and prioritised.

A Project Working Group, comprised of members of the Collaborative and senior representatives across a range of state government departments and agencies has been established to oversee the development of the Strategic Business Case – an essential prerequisite to proceeding to the development of a more comprehensive Detailed Business Case. In parallel, the State Government established an inter-departmental Project Steering Committee to ensure sound and ongoing communication and collaboration across agencies is achieved.

The Collaborative was also successful in securing \$100,000 in funding to develop a Water Use Efficiency Initiative, to be developed by Growcom, to ensure that existing water resources are being efficiently used and to identify where on-ground improvements may be implemented.

The Strategic Business Case is due for completion by the end of June 2019.

In addition to engaging closely with Government Departments and agencies has been regular meetings with elected representatives at local, state and federal levels and across political divides.

In particular engagement at the Federal level has occurred with Wright MP, Scott Bucholz, Blair MP Shayne Newman MP and Shadow Water Minister Tony Burke; at State level with LNP Leader Deb Frecklington MP; Lockyer MP Jim Macdonald MP and Ipswich West MP Jim Madden and Qld Ministers Antony Lynham and Cameron Dick has ensured that knowledge about what we are trying to achieve and how we are progressing is regularly communicated to these decision makers.

The LVSWC has also regularly engaged with local and regional media to ensure our message is heard across the Region.

It is important that we continue to communicate with a range of decision makers and opinion shapers if we are to maintain momentum over the next 12 months.

Members of the Collaborative can justly look back over the past 12 months with what has been achieved. We should also look ahead to what more needs to be done to achieve our objectives.

Following completion of the Strategic Business Case and its evaluation and assuming we gain the approval of Building Queensland to proceed to the development of the Detailed Business Case, the role of the LVSWC will take on a sharper focus. Of critical importance will be the need to maintain, what has worked so well for the Collaborative to date - that is the consistent support for and consensus around decisions taken by the Collaborative to advance our interests.