NSW Cross-Border Commissioner

NSW Regional Town Water Supply Coordinator

Helping to build resilient cross-border communities and businesses contributing to a stronger NSW economy

Resolving water supply and quality issues for communities in Regional NSW

Presentation to LGNSW Water Conference
James McTavish, Regional Town Water Supply Coordinator
Tuesday 3 September 2019
Short-term fixes and long-term solutions. Addressing water supply issues in NSW regional towns
NSW communities require equitable access to town water of suitable quality
Regional Town Water Coordinator

• Role
  - Ensure equitable access to town water of suitable quality

• Function
  - Coordinate response activity, including communications
  - Liaise with, and coordinate activity of, local government, NSW government agencies and SOCs
  - Identify and address significant policy and program issues.
My observations….

- Issues are more widespread than, but exacerbated by, drought
  - Sector capacity and resilience
  - LWU / LG capacity and financial sustainability
  - Infrastructure

- It’s not all about supply

- Longer term planning is needed
  - State, Region and LWU / LGA
  - Regional growth
  - Infrastructure and policy.
Observations

• High variability in levels of community preparedness and resilience

• Response activity is disjointed
  - Between governments and agencies
  - Between LWUs

• Communication is haphazard
  - Misinformation and disinformation
  - Poor understanding of issues and solutions

• Trust in government and agencies is diminished.
What are we doing

• Addressing issues in priority areas – short and medium term
  - Western towns
  - Macquarie Valley
  - Central West
  - Peel Valley
  - Northern tablelands
  - Border Rivers

• Development of plans for each LGA and region
  - SteerCo / working groups where necessary

• Executing communications and engagement activities

• Contributing to longer term policy development.
Moving forward

• Strong local and regional leadership
• Effective, aligned communication and engagement
• Coordination and alignment of activities
  - Local Government
  - Including across regions
  - State agencies
  - State Owned Corporations
  - Industry and local stakeholders
• Pragmatism.
Working with you

- Continuation of planning and response, with state agency assistance
  - Short term
  - Medium term
  - Longer term
  - Worst case scenario
- Regional Water Strategies and State Water Plan
- Identifying and addressing policy issues and gaps
- Preparation / review of drought management, response, recovery and transition plans
- Local and regional leadership and mentoring.
Questions

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