Minutes

GWMWater

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# Summary of the Ordinary Board Meeting

## Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 18 November 2026 held in the Old Shire Hall, 101 Lloyd Street, Dimboola

**Present:**
Directors: Caroline Welsh (Chair), Jude Holt, Andrew Nicolaou, Rod Jackson, Paul Hardy, Michelle Jackson, Stuart Read, Jess Adler (Directors) and Mark Williams (Managing Director).

In attendance: Sally Marshall (Executive Manager Strategic Planning and Performance), Nick Mumford (Executive Manager Infrastructure), Michael Schneider (Executive Manager Service Delivery), Adele Rohde (Executive Manager Customer and Employee Experience) and Janet Carra (Board Secretary).

### 1 Opening and Welcome from the Chair
The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which the meeting was held and paid respects to their Elders, past and present as well as Aboriginal Elders of other communities who may be present.

### 2 Apologies
Nil.

### 3 Declaration by Members of the Climate, Country and Sustainability Committee

### 3.1 Register of Interests
Noted.

### 3.2 Lobbying Activities
Nil.

### 4 Monthly OHS Performance Report
The Board reviewed OHS matters, including updated benchmarks, workplace safety and reported incidents for the month ending September and October 2026.

### 5 Confirmation of Minutes
The Board confirmed the minutes of the Ordinary Board Meeting held on Wednesday 16 September 2026 and the Special Board Meeting held Friday 23 October 2026, as circulated.

### 6 Action List Update from Previous Minutes
Noted.

## 7 Chair's Report

The Chair provided an update on the GWMWater Managing Director recruitment process and on the progress of the recruitment of an Aboriginal Delegate to the Board.

The Chair reported on the VicWater Chair's Forum and Annual General Meeting held on Friday 13 November 2026. Discussion focused on water sector reform following the Helen Silver Review, with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) continuing work in this area. The Chair also noted progress on Price Submission development across the sector and the future of the VicWater-established Aboriginal Director network.

## 8 Non-Executive Director's Reports and Insights

The respective Chairs of the Climate, Country and Sustainability Committee and Audit, Governance and Risk Committee provided an update on activities discussed since the last Board meeting.

## 9 Presentations

### 9.1 East Grampians and Mininera Rural Pipeline Project Zoning

The Board received an update on the East Grampians and Mininera Rural Pipeline Project, including the project boundaries, construction stages and customer engagement to date. A funding application has been submitted to the National Water Grid Fund to support completion of infill connections within the current footprint. The outcome of the application is yet to be determined. Landholders will continue to be informed.

### 9.2 BOOT Water Treatment Plant Transition Update

The Board received an update on the transition of the BOOT water treatment plants and interim operating arrangements ahead of the contract end date in December 2026.

## 10 Decision Papers

### 10.1 Managing Director's Report

The Managing Director reported on various activities and issues he was involved in since the previous meeting. A summary of matters arising is provided below:

- Provided an update on the Victorian Government's recent funding announcement for the Halls Gap sewer extension, extending the existing sewer main toward the Halls Gap Zoo.
- Reported on engagement with regulators and government, including the Essential Services Commission (ESC) online forum for Chairs and Managing Directors, and guidance for the 2028–2033 Water Price Review.
- Reported on the feedback received from the Treasurer and the Minister for Water on GWMWater's 2026/27 Corporate Plan.
- Provided an update on stakeholder and community engagement, including the Customer and Stakeholder Forum, the Recreation Water User Group meeting in Jeparit, the Consultative Committee for the Western Sustainable Water Supply Strategy, and a meeting with the Department of Health on drinking water quality priorities.
- Confirmed the lodgement of GWMWater's Water Supply Demand Strategy with DEECA on 2 November 2026.
- Provided an update on water quality upgrades at Berriwillock and Culgoa, noting ongoing work to demonstrate drinking water quality across both networks.

- Provided an update on an operational incident occurring in October 2026 at the Horsham sewer transfer pump station following heavy rainfall. The response followed the documented contingency plan, and an incident report will go to the Board's Environment and Capital Works Committee.
- Provided an update on water resources, with storage levels continuing to rise and the overall resource position the best since 2022/23.
- Advised of a keynote presentation he provided to the Victoria University in Melbourne on 21 September 2026 on the application of AI, machine learning, optimisation and technologies in water management.
- Advised that GWMWater's Annual Report was tabled in Parliament on 30 October 2026.
- Noted GWMWater hosted a soft launch of the East Grampians Rural Pipeline Project on 30 September with Martha Haylett representing the Minister for Water and attended by the Mayors of Ararat and Northern Grampians Rural City Councils.

### 10.2 Business Performance Report

The Board received the Business Performance Report outlining the interim result of the operational and financial performance of GWMWater for the months ending September and October 2026 and endorsed the quarterly report ending September 2026 submitted to DEECA and the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF).

### 10.3 Internal Audit Plan 2026/27

The Board approved GWMWater's internal audit program for 2026 to 2029, providing a risk-based program of assurance activities designed to strengthen governance, inform continuous improvement and meet the expectations of regulators.

## 11 Discussion Papers

### 11.1 East Grampians and Mininera Rural Pipeline Project

An update on the progress of the project was provided to Board. Contractor, Mitchell Water Australia has completed pipeline installation on the East Grampians Rural Pipeline Project and connected customers are receiving water supply. Mininera pipeline and facility works are progressing on schedule, with 97.6 kilometres of pipe installed and all facility sites under construction.

### 11.2 Consultative Committee and Reference Group Meetings

The Board noted the update on the Wimmera-Glenelg Water Resource Assessment provided by the Storage Manager on 9 October and 6 November 2026, and received the outcomes of the Recreation Water Users Group meeting held 6 October 2026, and Customer and Stakeholder Workshop held 9 October 2026.

### 11.3 2025-2030 Communications and Engagement Strategy Progress Update

The Board received an update on the Communications and Engagement Strategy 2026-2031, noting good progress against the five Phase 1 priorities, including brand refresh and new website. Other activities continue to be delivered as part of technology upgrades and as the Price Submission program is rolled out.

### 11.4 GWMWater Traditional Owner Working Group Update

The Board noted an update on GWMWater's engagement with Traditional Owners for the September 2026 quarter, including progress on the Reconciliation Strategy and the Board Delegate recruitment.

### 11.5 Annual Research Plan

The Board received an overview of GWMWater's draft 2026/27 Research and Innovation Plan, which includes ongoing and new projects aimed at improving operational efficiency, asset and energy management, and water quality and by-product reuse.

### 11.6 AI Adoption – Government Guidance and Governance Considerations

The Board noted an internal review of Australian and Victorian Government guidance on AI and supported GWMWater continuing a risk-based approach to adopting AI.

### 12 Correspondence

Noted.

### 13 Documents for Signing Under Seal

Noted.

### 14 Documents Signed Under Delegated Authority

Noted.

### 15 General Business

The Board noted that planning is underway to confirm meeting dates for 2027. The Board will also receive an update early in the new year on the review of Board policies, aligned with the Matters Reserved for the Board and the revised Statement of Obligations issued by the Minister for Water.

### 16 Meeting Feedback

Noted.

### 17 Next Meeting

The next ordinary meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday 15 December 2026.

*DISCLAIMER:*
***This is a summary record of the Ordinary Board Meeting held 18 November 2026 provided for information only as meeting minutes will not be confirmed until the December 2026 meeting.***

*Acknowledgement of Board activities:*
On 17 November 2026, Directors toured the Wimmera and Southern Mallee region visiting water and wastewater facilities and water storage sites in Warracknabeal, Beulah, Hopetoun, Rainbow, Jeparit, Nhill and Dimboola. Directors also had the opportunity to meet with local community representatives, including the newly appointed Chair of the Price Submission Community Panel, to discuss local water issues.

An insight session was provided to the Board prior to the meeting on the development of the 2028–2033 Price Submission, covering the key timelines, inputs and community engagement

activities that will inform it. A community panel is being established to test community views and support Board decision-making, with its first meeting scheduled for 30 November. The submission is due on 13 September 2027, with a draft decision from the ESC expected in March 2028 and a final decision in June 2028.