

A Participatory Approach to Future Water Security for Cairns

WSAG Community Collaboration

8th May 2015

Presentation overview

- Issue
- Why an Advisory Group process was chosen
- What is the Advisory group
- Details
- Process
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Issue

- Need for a long term water supply strategy to ensure that Cairns has sufficient water to meet forecast demand under normal and adverse environmental conditions.
- Strategy to identify a program of supply augmentations and demand management initiatives
- Prior planning which utilised a technical and engineering approach **followed** by community 'engagement' phase, (Design, Advise, Defend approach), was not completely successful.
- The interaction between people (customers/stakeholders) and the use of water is complex, with many and varied opinions.
- So CRC sought to 'involve/collaborate' with the community, via an Advisory Group, at the beginning of the strategy development

Why an Advisory Group process was chosen

- Collectively addresses the principles of compliance, affordability, practicality and acceptability as early in the process as possible.
- The success of other similar engagement processes in the water industry.
- The lessons learnt from prior water supply planning
- Enabled the preferred level of engagement
- Early community engagement leads to community acceptance, and consequently a more certain implementation.
- The community is involved in selecting the balance between their chosen Level of Service and the cost of providing this Level of Service

What is the Advisory group

Selection of relevant community stakeholders, who volunteer their time to share learnings and opinions and spend some time together.

- WSAG members invited to participate – all accepted
- 21 full members across 14 groups

Representation from the following community sectors:

- Elected members of Cairns Regional Council and relevant adjoining councils;
- State government agencies;
- Business groups;
- Community and cultural groups;
- Youth groups; and,
- Environmental groups.



Details

Arrangements

- An independent Chairperson was appointed by Council
- A draft Terms of Reference prepared for final adoption by the WSAG members
- Discussion starter provided to assist with understanding
- The WSAG met on a regular basis (generally monthly) to receive presentations and discuss relevant issues
- Associate members could attend
- Outside of WSAG scope: pricing of water

Objective

- to formulate a preferred 30 year water supply strategy for **consideration** by Council.

Process

The overall WSAG process consisted of phases 4 namely:

1. Defining objectives and educating the WSAG members about key water supply planning concepts
2. Developing evaluation criteria
3. Evaluating options, strategies and shortlisting of strategies
4. Refinement of the preferred strategy

- Duration - 12 meetings

Outcome

Numerous water supply options were considered by the WSAG:

- Potable water demand reduction strategies
- Enhancement of the bulk water supply system
- New bulk water sources
- New bulk water treatment and reuse plants

Frequent robust discussions resulted in a highly rigorous assessment process

Comprehensive examination of numerous options and strategies facilitated by a multi-criteria analysis tool

The WSAG settled on a preferred strategy supported **unanimously** by WSAG for subsequent consideration by Council.

Challenges and Benefits

Doesn't Council lose control? No, the WSAG develops a preferred 30 year water supply strategy for consideration by Council. Council considers other issues beyond those discussed by the WSAG. Council retains its decision making responsibilities, but is now more informed of the overall community preference.

Council **does need** to be actively involved in WSAG discussions to assist with focus on the subject, affordability of solutions, practicality of implementation and compliance with their numerous obligations and responsibilities.

Managed participation enables community engagement and collaboration.

Benefits

- Increased **community understanding** of the issues associated with a water supply strategy and the complexity of continued service provision
- Various stakeholders directly hear other stakeholders points of view in a managed environment, usually resulting in greater understanding and **moderation of opinions**
- Improved community perception of Council (Brand)
- Greater acceptance of solution with subsequent increased **certainty of implementation** (cost and schedule)
- Greater understanding of need for restrictions, resulting in **less resistance and more compliance** (Drought Mgmt)
- More transparent reasoning for the increased **cost of the chosen** level of water security
- Increased confidence in provision of essential service **enabling more economic development**
- Stakeholders can't say they weren't involved

Challenges

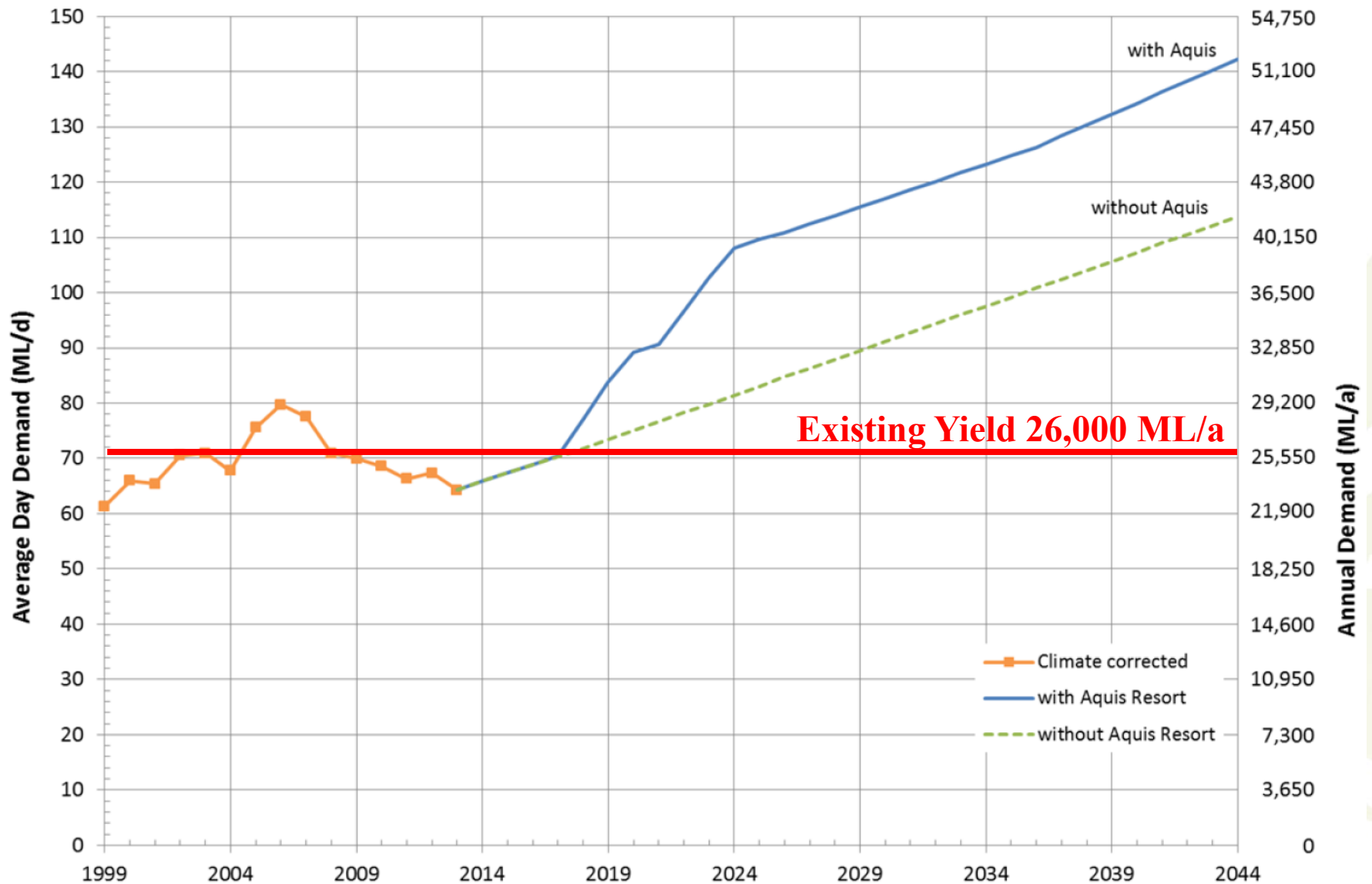
- Upfront cost
- Time to complete the activity
- Managing group interactions
- Focussing discussions
- Providing quality information for consideration and discussion, to the periodic meeting schedule
- Being flexible whilst focussed to ensure stakeholder buy-in whilst progressing to the output
- Ensuring engagement of stakeholder group, not just the representative present
- Managing compromise, whilst maintaining a minimum outcome (compliance), and producing an affordable, practical and acceptable strategy.

Preferred Strategy

- Preferred strategy developed for demand without and with Aquis development
- Timing of new source elements the key to the flexibility required for meeting the two scenarios
- First source (Mulgrave River) was common to both scenarios, which allows strategy to meet short term (immediate) needs
- Medium term source : Various options exist
- Long term source : Various additional regional options exist
- Insufficient certainty regarding availability of and impact from the medium and long term options requires additional investigation, which is part of the Strategy implementation

Council has received and noted WSAG preferred Strategy. An implementation plan is being developed

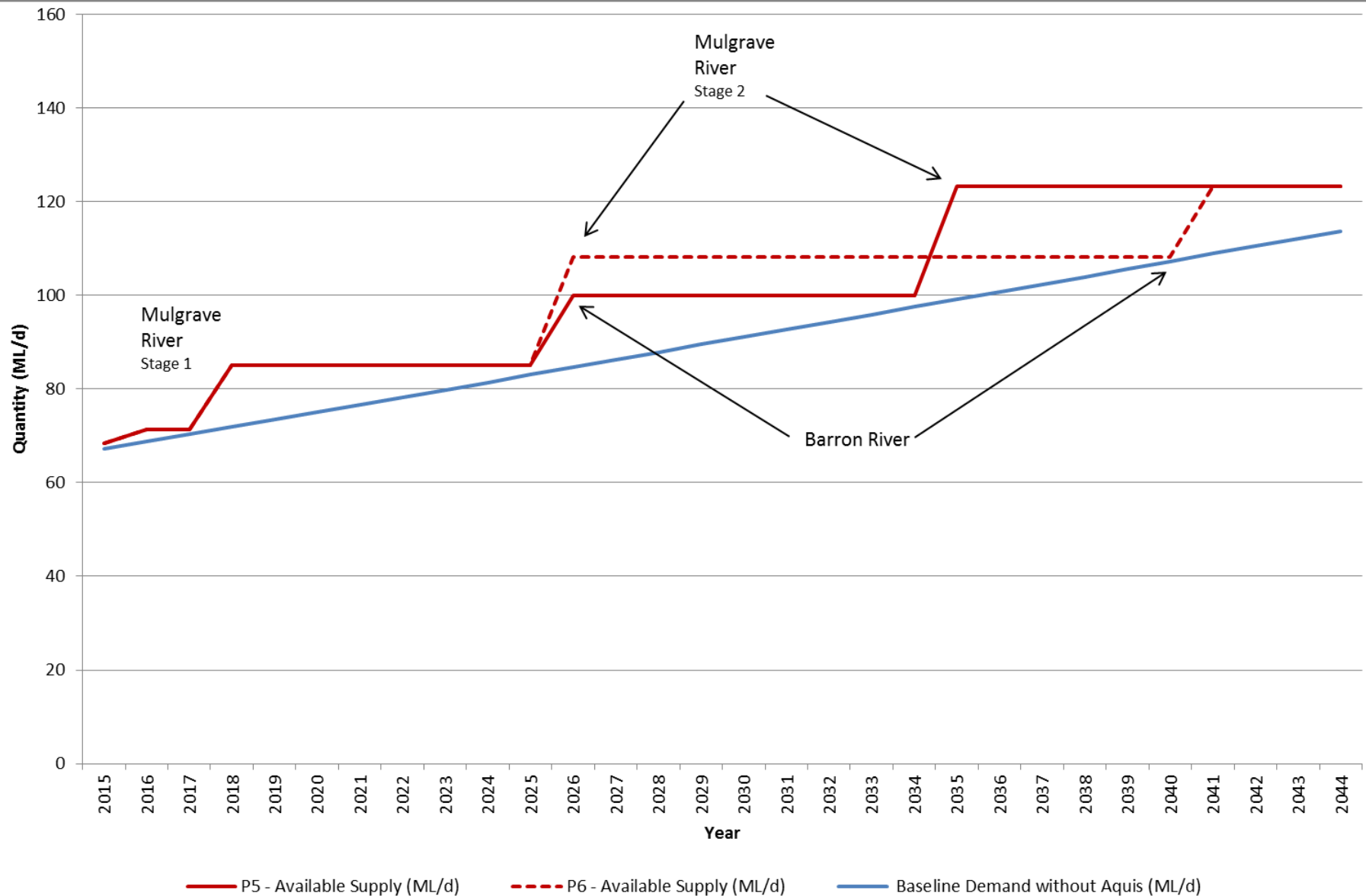
Projected Demand



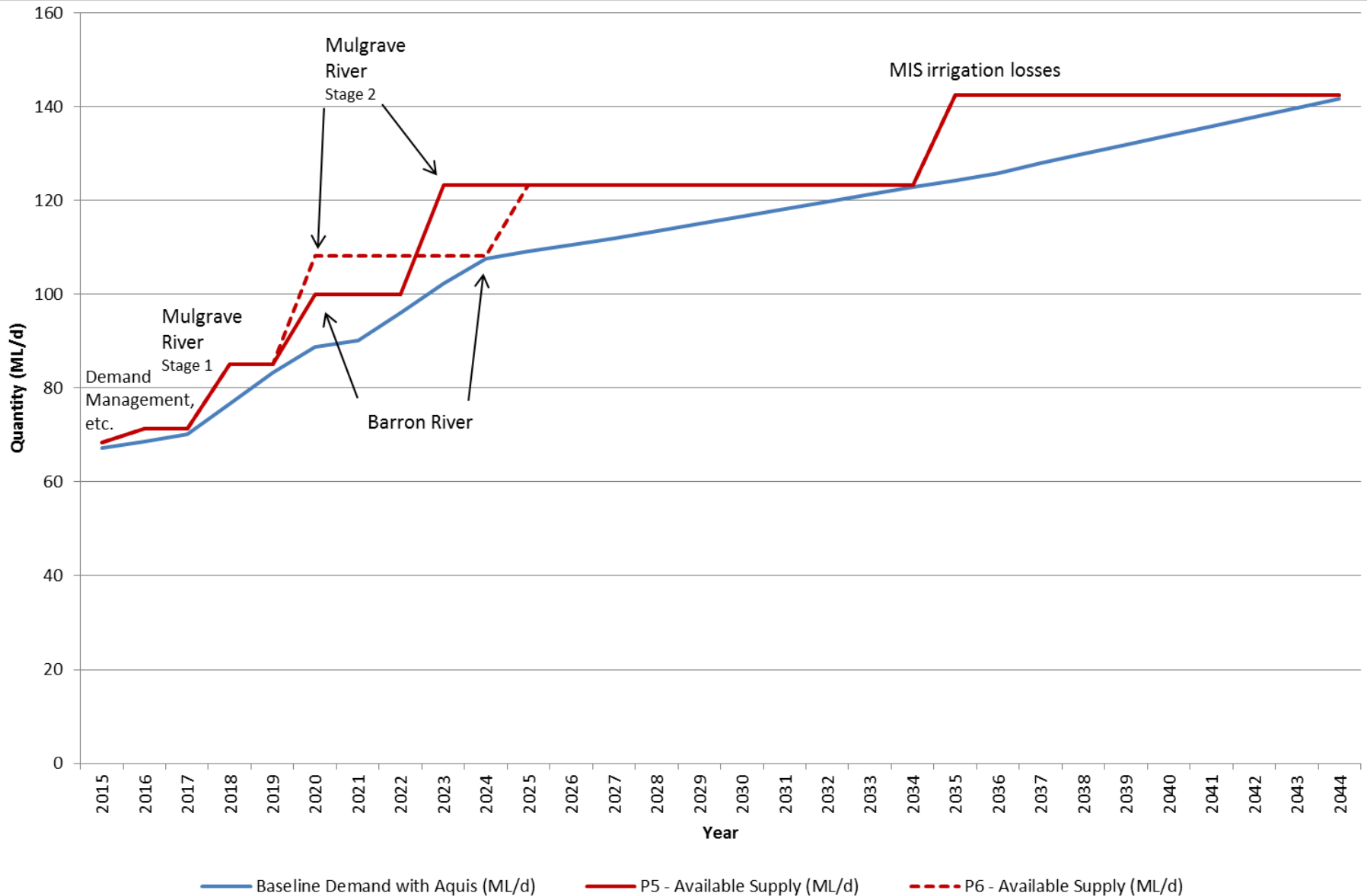
Preferred Strategy

Source	Aspect	Notes
Demand Management Strategy	Commence as soon as practicable	
Mulgrave River Stage 1	1 st additional source	Further assessment and monitoring
Barron River Stage 1	2 nd / 3 rd additional source	Requires further investigation before proceeding, including triple bottom line comparative assessment
Mulgrave River Stage 2 or Mulgrave Mill entitlement		
MDWSS Losses (priority), Nullinga Dam	Further investigation as soon as possible	WSAG forum continues
To be determined, that allows for agreed minimum requirements	Emergency Sources	Requires community involvement

Without Aquis



With Aquis



Interaction

- Questions?
- Comments!
- Discussion

WSAG Members

Full Members

- Cairns Regional Council (CRC)
- Mareeba Shire Council (MSC)
- Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM)
- Department of Energy and Water Supply (DEWS)
- Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA)
- Mareeba Dimbulah Irrigation Area Council
- Advance Cairns
- Urban Development Industry Association (UDIA) Cairns
- Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC)
- Mulgrave River Aquifer Community Reference Panel (MRACRP)
- Cairns River Improvement Trust (CRIT)
- Cairns Youth Engagement and Action (YEA!)
- Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Alliance (RAPA)
- and local general community members

Associate Members

- Queensland Health
- Mulgrave Central Mill
- Stanwell
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)
- Sunwater
- Canegrowers

Chair – Mr Paul Gregory



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Images may be included

Keep to a grid when placing images, text neatly to one side to allow room for a square cropped image on the other side. Text should be concise summary of your verbal presentation – do not read from the slide.