

**Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and
Large Coal Mining Development (IESC)
Meeting 71, 5 November 2020**

**MINUTES
Videoconference**

ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

IN ATTENDANCE

Dr Chris Pigram (Chair)
Dr Andrew Boulton
Dr Catherine Moore
Professor Craig Simmons
Professor Jenny Davis
Dr Jenny Stauber
Dr Rory Nathan
Professor Wendy Timms

OFFICE OF WATER SCIENCE (OWS)

Peter Baker	Harrison Martin
Jason Smith	Mio Kuhnen
Praveen Sebastian	Misty Dawn Thorose
Alannah Wood	Nicola Smillie
Alex Hannan-Joyner	Alexandra Auhl (Items 3.3, 3.4 and 4)
Benjamin Klug	Tia Stevens, Assistant Secretary Biodiversity Policy and Water Science

INVITED GUESTS

Declan O'Connor-Cox, Branch Head Environment Assessments (Victoria and Tasmania) and Post Approvals Branch, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (Item 3.2)
Natasha Amerasinghe, A/g Director Water Resources Regulatory Support, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (Item 3.2)
Adrian Lill, Bureau of Meteorology (Item 3.3)
Elisabetta Carrara, Bureau of Meteorology (Item 3.3)
Elizabeth McDonald, Bureau of Meteorology (Item 3.3)
Eloise Nation, Bureau of Meteorology (Item 3.3)
Christopher Loveday, Director, Queensland Department of Environment and Science (Item 3.4)
Claire Andersen, Executive Director, Queensland Department of Environment and Science (Item 3.4)
James Ross, Director, Queensland Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation (Item 3.4)
Jason Richard, Director, Queensland Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation (Item 3.4)
Melissa Wells, Executive Director, Queensland Department of Environment and Science (Item 3.4)
Rachel Burgess-Dean, Executive Director, Queensland Department of Environment and Science (Item 3.4)

The meeting commenced at 9.00am AEDT on Thursday 5 November 2020.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed members of the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development (IESC) to the meeting.

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

The Chair acknowledged the traditional owners, past and present, on whose land this meeting was held.

1.2 Disclosure of Interests

Before the meeting commenced, Committee members completed the Meeting Declaration of Interests.

1.3 Confirmation of Agenda

The Committee endorsed the agenda for Meeting 71.

1.4 Confirmation of Out-of-Session decisions

The Committee noted that:

- advice on Isaac Plains East Extension Project was provided to the regulator and published in accordance with agreed timeframes;
- minutes of the Committee's seventieth meeting on 26-27 August were agreed and published;
- views on a National Environmental Standard for Water and the future role of the Committee were agreed and provided to the independent review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act); and
- as agreed at a videoconference on 1 August 2020, a draft research project proposal was completed by a subgroup and circulated to the Committee for further discussion.

1.5 Correspondence

The Committee noted the status of correspondence to 16 October 2020.

1.6 Action Items

Ongoing items were noted and an update was provided on the timing of completion.

1.7 Forward Planning Agenda

The Committee noted the forward planning agenda.

It was agreed the next meeting be scheduled for the second week in December 2020.

1.8 Environmental Scan

Committee members and OWS reported back on developments in recent months, including:

- Chair's meeting with the Acting CEO of the Queensland GasFields Commission;
- technical advice provided by OWS on a model developed to assess the potential cumulative impacts of mining activities on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area; and
- final report of the independent review of the EPBC Act has been submitted to the Minister for the Environment.

3. Other Business

3.1 Using Metagenomic Approaches (eDNA) - Potential Research Project

At the Committee's meeting on research opportunities held on 1 October 2020, it was decided to investigate current ecological response knowledge gaps. Based on this decision, a subgroup of the Committee, with support of the OWS, developed a draft for a potential research project. The Committee discussed this draft and agreed on the scope of the tentatively titled 'Using metagenomic approaches (eDNA) to assess phreatic faunal and microbial responses to alterations in groundwater hydrology and water quality associated with coal mining and CSG development' project. It was further agreed that the OWS will organise an Approach to Market to be published on AusTender.

3.2 Managing Cumulative Impacts in the Surat

Members from Water Resources Regulatory Support in the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment provided a presentation on the Joint Industry Framework, which is currently being developed for the longer-term management of cumulative impacts to water resources from coal seam gas development in the Surat Cumulative Management Area in Queensland.

3.3 Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDE) Atlas

Representatives from the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) provided a presentation on the GDE Atlas, Australia's national repository of groundwater dependent ecosystems mapping.

3.4 Queensland Regulators Roundtable

The Committee hosted an informal discussion with invitees from the Queensland Department of Environment and Science and the Queensland Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation. The discussion covered various topics of mutual interest.

4. Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.00 pm AEDT on Thursday 5 November 2020.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for the second week of December 2020, to be held via videoconference.

Minutes confirmed as true and correct:

Dr Chris Pigram AM, FTSE

IESC Chair

17 November 2020