

**Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Unconventional Gas Development and
Large Coal Mining Development (IESC)
Meeting 103, 6 March 2024**

**MINUTES
Videoconference**

ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

IN ATTENDANCE

Dr Chris Pigram (Chair)
Dr Andrew Boulton
Professor Jenny Davis
Dr Juliette Woods
Associate Professor Phil Hayes
Professor Wendy Timms

APOLOGIES

Dr Jenny Stauber
Professor Rory Nathan

INVITED GUESTS

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)

Item 3.2

Tanya Rough, Director – Nature Positive Law Reform and Standards, Nature Positive Taskforce.

Item 3.3

Kate Rodgers, Assistant Director – Environment Assessments Policy, Nature Positive Regulation Division.

OFFICE OF WATER SCIENCE (OWS)

Dr Des Owen, Director
Amelia Lewis
Aranza Bulnes-Beniscelli
Ben Klug
Dylan Stinton
Frances Knight

Isabelle Francis
Jason Smith
Loren Pollitt
Dr Sarah Taylor

Note: OWS attendees include those with full or partial attendance.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair acknowledged the traditional owners, past and present, on whose lands this meeting was held, and welcomed members of the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Unconventional Gas Development and Large Coal Mining Development (IESC) to the meeting.

1.1 Attendance and Apologies

IESC members in attendance and apologies are recorded above.

1.2 Disclosure of Interests

Committee members were invited to make disclosures. Committee members also completed a Meeting Declaration of Interests before the meeting commenced. No actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest were recorded for this meeting.

1.3 Confirmation of Agenda

The Committee endorsed the agenda for Meeting 103.

1.4 Confirmation of Out-of-Session Decisions

The Committee noted that:

- minutes of the Committee's 102nd meeting on 31 January 2024 were agreed out-of-session and published on 19 February 2024; and

1.5 Correspondence

The Committee noted the status of correspondence to 26 February 2024.

1.6 Action Items

Ongoing items were noted and updates were provided on the timing of completion.

1.7 Forward Planning Agenda

The Committee noted the forward planning agenda.

It was agreed that the next meeting be scheduled to be a videoconference on 9 – 11 April 2024.

1.8 Environmental Scan

The OWS reported on recent events.

2. Advice on Projects referred by governments

No projects were referred for advice.

3. Other business

3.1 Nature Positive Legislation Package – Consultation session report

IESC member, Dr Andrew Boulton, reported on draft details of new national environmental laws, that he viewed during the consultation sessions held by DCCEEW's Nature Positive Taskforce in Perth on 22 February 2024, and the Committee discussed the report.

3.2 Nature Positive Legislation Package – Draft policy paper

The Committee discussed the draft policy paper on statutory committee reform with Tanya Rough from DCCEEW's Nature Positive Taskforce.

3.3 Expansion of the Water Trigger – Significant Impact Guidelines 1.3

The Committee discussed the draft amendments to the *Significant Impact Guidelines 1.3*, that reflect the recently expanded scope of the water trigger, with Kate Rodgers from DCCEEW's Nature Positive Regulation Division.

3.4 Presentation on Plant DNA in Alluvial Aquifers

Loren Pollitt, Water Scientist, Office of Water Science, and PhD student, Macquarie University, presented on the detection of plant DNA in alluvial aquifers.

3.5 Adequacy Review of IESC Advices

The Committee discussed learnings from proponents' responses to IESC advice provided on government regulators' requests for advice on the impact of water resources from proposals for coal seam gas and coal mining developments.

4. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 5.05pm on Wednesday 6 March 2024.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled as a videoconference on 9 – 11 April 2024.

Minutes confirmed as true and correct:

Dr Chris Pigram AM, FTSE

IESC Chair

22 March 2024