

City and Environment Directorate

OFFICIAL

To:	Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water	Tracking No.: 25/0000222
Date:	8 August 2025	
From:	City and Environment Directorate	
Subject:	WEEKLY BRIEF - Commencing 11 August 2025	

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Purpose

To provide you with a summary of the current work from the City and Environment Directorate. The brief also includes matters scheduled to occur from 11 to 15 August 2025.

KEY ISSUES

Climate Change, Energy and Water

Water

National Water Agreement

Chris Hepplewhite from Office of Water represented the ACT at the inaugural meeting of the National Water Agreement (NWA) Roadmap Working Group on 28 July 2025. The Roadmap Working Group (RWG) will support the National Water Committee (NWC) to:

- develop policy under the new NWA as part of joint policy roadmap (JPR) work, and
- support implementation of the NWA via development of the Joint Policy Roadmap.

The RWG provides advice to the NWC on positions or policy advice. It is not a decision-making body.

The Commonwealth had provided a briefing to Minister Watt regarding the NWA and more info will be sent to state and territory Water Ministers for endorsement in “weeks not months”. To prepare the Cabinet submission to seek the ACT Government’s endorsement (as per CAB24/619), the Office of Water has distributed the most recent draft of the NWA to other agencies for review with respect to potential risks and resourcing requirements.

The next National Water Committee Meeting is scheduled for 27 November 2025.

Submission of papers to the Hydrology and Water Resources Symposium

The Water Information Services (WIS) team has submitted three papers and contributed to two further papers being submitted by consultants working on projects with the ACT Government to the *Hydrology and Water Resources Symposium* to be held in Canberra in November 2025. Submissions will be reviewed and invitations to present the papers at the symposium will be announced soon. The WIS team submitted papers on the following topics:

- Lake Tuggeranong catchment water quality modelling to inform catchment management,

- b. Water Resources Assessment for the ACT, and
- c. Water Vulnerability Assessment.

The two additional papers that we have contributed to are:

- a. A study into runoff dams in the ACT and region (led by HARC Pty Ltd)
- b. A study looking at urban runoff accounting (led by Alluvium)

Healthy Waterways Plan for Lake Tuggeranong

Office of Water and CED Communications staff briefed executives from City Operations on the *Options to Restore Lake Tuggeranong report*. Several of the pollution mitigation options that are central to cleaning up Lake Tuggeranong (e.g. enhanced street sweeping) will be delivered by City Operations (if adopted by Government).

Prior to the establishment of CED, the Office of Water has been working closely with City Operations staff at officer level for several years on Healthy Waterways initiatives. The new Directorate provides an opportunity to even better integrate delivery across government. Key discussion points included some challenges associated with scaling up activities like street sweeping and the efforts in operating rain gardens and other water quality infrastructure. OoW will continue to engage across Government as the report makes its way forward for Cabinet consideration and (pending decision of Cabinet) into public consultation.

Recognition of urban runoff as an important source of water in the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB)

You were recently provided with high level information on work underway by the Water Information Services (WIS) team to better understand and seek recognition of urban runoff as a water resource of the MDB. You asked how this work might relate to the Water Abstraction Charge (WAC). While the two pieces of work are not directly related, there is a connection to the extent that any success in recognising urban runoff from the ACT as a water resource that could be traded would in theory have an impact on water prices in the regulated water market, and so may impact the scarcity value of water component of the WAC. The impact of a change in the water market by introducing a water resource that has previously been available to downstream water users has not been modelled, however the relative volumes of urban runoff are not expected to have a significant impact on the scarcity value of water.

As Treasury progresses its review of and presentation of options on the WAC, the Office of Water will continue to provide advice, including on the implications of changes to the water trading framework for the ACT and broader water market.

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