

The Geological and Bioregional Assessment (GBA) Program held its third User Panel meeting for the Cooper Basin in Brisbane on 1 August 2019. The GBA Program appreciates the contributions of all panellists during the day in helping refine the Stage 3 work, and through the offer of ongoing assistance to support the GBA Program.

This communique outlines the key topics discussed by the User Panel during the meeting.

- User Panellists from the Queensland and South Australia governments reflected on the benefits the Program is providing around provision of data and integrated environmental assessments.
- CSIRO presented an overview of the Stage 2 geological and environmental baseline assessment for the Cooper GBA region, which is expected to be published in the final quarter of 2019. The work includes a synthesis of existing geological, ecological and water related information and identification of key risks and knowledge gaps that will be the focus for the GBA Program in Stage 3, impact analysis and management.
- A question and answer session focused on the Cooper Creek floodplain and recent flooding in the basin. The rich discussion highlighted sources of local historical hydrological knowledge and further hydrological datasets and assets for scientists to consider in the assessment.
- The User Panel discussed the approach to defining an unconventional gas development scenario for the Cooper GBA region. The proposed method, based on taking into account existing infrastructure, protected assets and reservoir prospectivity was generally well received. The User Panel noted the need to utilise refined environmental asset layers and to consider existing industry production requirements to ensure development scenarios are as realistic as possible.
- CSIRO presented an overview of the impact assessment approach for protected matters to be delivered in Stage 3. The development and use of an environmental accounting framework was outlined, this will support knowledge needs for ongoing management and analysis of key environmental data once the GBA Program is completed.
- CSIRO presented information on the LiDAR data capture and the hydrodynamic models being developed for Cooper Creek in Stage 3 of the GBA Program. The User Panel indicated that this work is key to meeting their information needs in the Cooper GBA region and committed to providing feedback on their requirements from the model, enabling optimum alignment between user needs and model output.

- The assessment team presented information on proposed Stage 3 hydrogeological investigations. Members of the panel indicated they will assist program scientists in identifying appropriate bores for groundwater sampling occurring in the coming weeks. This work aims to improve knowledge of the extent and connectivity in shallow to mid-depth aquifer systems. The GBA Program will also follow up with panellists to identify springs that could be sampled that may not be included in springs databases.
- The User Panel discussed the need for brief communication documents focused on key concerns of end-users, such as hydraulic fracturing. The GBA Program highlighted the upcoming release of the first GBA Newsletter and committed to developing further communication material to support user panellists in communicating assessment findings within their organisations and communities.
- The User Panel agreed the next User Panel meeting will occur in the 2nd quarter of 2020. The GBA Program will continue to work with end users to determine a suitable location.