



The Honourable Melinda Pavey MP
Minister for Water, Property and Housing

B20/10897

Ms Cate Faerhmann
Chair
Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Attn: Ms Madeleine Dowd
Principal Council Officer, Upper House Committees
Email:

Dear Ms Faerhmann

Thank you for the opportunity for Mr Jim Bentley, Deputy Secretary Water, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Mr Andrew George, A/CEO Water NSW, and me to appear before the Committee's hearing on the inquiry into the rationale for, and impacts of, new dams and other water infrastructure in NSW on Friday 4 December 2020.

Please find attached answers to the questions we took on notice during the hearing.

Yours sincerely

Melinda Pavey MP
Minister for Water, Property and Housing

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 7 - PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

RATIONALE FOR, AND IMPACTS OF, NEW DAMS AND OTHER WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN NSW

Questions on Notice

Page	Topic	Question	Response
Q1(p41)	Responsibility for final sign-off on Regional Water Strategies	<p>The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Who finally decides what is in what is out?</p> <p>Mr BENTLEY: The regional water strategies – there is an executive committee, which I chair, and then we make recommendations to the Minister and others in terms of -</p> <p>The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So the Minister has final sign-off?</p> <p>Mr BENTLEY: I might take that on notice, if you do not mind.</p>	A cross agency Water Strategies Executive Committee, chaired by the Deputy Secretary Water, will endorse a preferred portfolio of infrastructure, policy and operational responses to be included in the final version of each Regional Water Strategy. This will then be recommended for the Minister's consideration, prior to submission to Cabinet.
Q2(p51)	Gin Gin weir storage capacity	<p>The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I want to talk about Gin Gin Weir, which is slightly different. We have had some different evidence that is unclear to me. Everyone understands that Gin Gin Weir is very old and it needs to be replaced in whatever way that we do that. Can you just confirm that the total amount of storage that will be in Gin Gin Weir is going to be 4,000 megalitres as opposed to the 15 to 2,000 megalitres now?</p> <p>Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I will ask Mr George to answer that because there has been some disinformation about that and what we are doing is improving the capacity, the leakage –</p> <p>The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So it is going to be storing more water?</p> <p>Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: -and the infrastructure at a weir that is not fit for purpose any longer.</p> <p>The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So it is currently able to store around 1,500 to 2,000 and now it is going to be able to store 4,000. I just want to clarify that it is 4,000 in total. It is not 1,500 plus 4,000?</p> <p>Mr GEORGE: Can I take a moment to find that information for you?</p>	The proposed capacity of the Macquarie River Re-Regulating Storage is 6 gigalitres (GL). The design for the storage has evolved from 9 GL to 6 GL based on further investigations and stakeholder feedback received during the early stages of the project. The storage capacity was reduced in order to minimise the impact to aquatic and terrestrial environments, as well as impacts to landowners, while also meeting operational needs and reducing project cost.

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 7 - PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

RATIONALE FOR, AND IMPACTS OF, NEW DAMS AND OTHER WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN NSW

Page	Topic	Question	Response
Q3(p53)	Break-down of cost estimates for Wyangala Dam wall raising project (further to questioning from p37 of transcript)	<p>The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, thank you. That is quite important and we were given very different information this morning. I wanted to go back to Walgett. Actually, sorry, I will ask a different question that you may have to take on notice. You have indicated previously that within your current costings, some of it includes biodiversity offsetting, some of it includes purchase for water licence, some of it includes replacement infrastructure and some of it includes land acquisition. Would you be able to provide back to the Committee on notice a breakdown of the current funding and what has been allocated within those budget envelopes for those matters?</p> <p>Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I will take that on notice.</p>	<p>On 11 May 2020 the NSW Government announced funding of \$245 million for the first stage of delivery of state significant dams at Wyangala, Dungowan and Mole River. Within that envelope is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for the final business case, pre-construction and preliminary works on the Wyangala Wall Raising project; • Funding for the final business case, pre-construction and preliminary works on the Dungowan Dam project; • Funding for the Final Business Case for the Mole River Dam project. <p>Detailed design of the dams is currently underway as part of preparing the Final Business Cases for the projects.</p> <p>Alongside this, project costs estimates are being further refined. Future funding arrangements for the three projects will be determined when the NSW Government makes its investment decisions after the Final Business Cases are completed.</p>

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 7 - PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

RATIONALE FOR, AND IMPACTS OF, NEW DAMS AND OTHER WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN NSW

Page	Topic	Question	Response
Q4(p53)	Hydrological modelling for Wyangala Dam wall raising.	<p>The CHAIR: Just going back to Wyangala – we could have spent two hours on every project. Has DPIE undertaken hydrological modelling for the Wyangala Dam wall raising?</p> <p>Mr BENTLEY: I am not sure what DPIE has done and what the Minister has done. It may be-</p> <p>The CHAIR: Has any hydrological modelling been undertaken? I might start there.</p> <p>Mr BENTLEY: It might be safer to take on notice exactly what modelling has been done.</p>	<p>Hydrological modelling occurred in the Lachlan Valley as part of the report: <i>Water Security for Regions: Belubula and Lachlan River Dam Investigation Report (December 2014)</i>.</p> <p>As part of the Wyangala Wall Raising project, WaterNSW is currently working with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) to undertake river system modelling. The DPIE Lachlan Integrated Water Quantity and Quality Model (IQQM) is being used as well as the current WaterNSW operational models. DPIE's IQQM is based on historical data spanning the period from 1895 to 2009. The DPIE IQQM modelling also includes the stochastic paleo climatic data sets.</p>