



7 June 2021

Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC

Chair

Portfolio Committee 7

By email: [PortfolioCommittee7@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:PortfolioCommittee7@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

**Re: Allegations in relation to conduct during interactions with Indigenous stakeholder groups associated with the Mole River dam project**

Dear Ms Faehrmann,

I am writing regarding allegations made at the public hearing of the committee on 3 May 2021, in relation to WaterNSW or its contractors' conduct during interactions with Indigenous stakeholder groups associated with the Mole River dam project.

WaterNSW, Water Infrastructure NSW and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) take these matters very seriously. As the two parties involved in the on-ground works associated with the proposed Mole River dam, WaterNSW and Water Infrastructure NSW are working directly with Indigenous community groups and our contractors to better understand these claims and how their concerns can be addressed. Two face-to-face meetings were held on 31 May and 1 June 2021 between WaterNSW, Water Infrastructure NSW, relevant Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) and other interested parties. All Registered Aboriginal Parties and interested parties on the project were invited to these meetings.

The engagement of and input from Aboriginal groups is critical to the successful delivery of the Mole River project. At present, the Mole River project has engaged with 45 official RAPs and another 40 Aboriginal parties, who are not official RAPs but whose input and engagement we value. As part of development of the Strategic Business Case, a draft Mole River Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Report will soon be provided to RAPs for their feedback and input. The finalisation of this report will take on feedback from RAPs, particularly regarding the existence of culturally significant sites.



I will be pleased to provide the committee with an update once our discussions with RAPs on the above matters have concluded.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew George  
Acting CEO