

Brett Whitworth – response to questions taken on notice at the hearing on Wednesday 15 June 2022 before the Select Committee on the Response to Major Flooding across New South Wales in 2022

QUESTION 1:

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: - Mr Whitworth, can I ask you about rain gauges in the catchment? You are probably aware that the Mayor of Lismore gave as evidence that the department of planning declined an application for funding to improve that early warning system. We have also heard evidence this morning from BOM, saying that the assets are owned jointly, I think, or managed jointly. I just wondered if there is some thought given to how we can improve— (sic)

BRETT WHITWORTH: Sorry, Ms Cusack, I'm from the planning part of the Department of Planning and Environment. That question about the water gauges, I am assuming, is one for the water group of the Department of Planning and Environment. I can take it on notice, but I can't answer that question.

RESPONSE 1:

Local councils are required to have a current floodplain management plan in place in order to be eligible for funding for implementation grants under the Floodplain Management grant program. This is to ensure money is used to enable Council's endorsed floodplain management actions to be prioritised for funding.

In the 2020-21 Floodplain Management grant round, Lismore Council was awarded \$90,571 to help them review and update their floodplain risk management study. This project is due to be completed by Council in February 2023.

In the 2021-22 grant round, Lismore City Council submitted an application under the implementation stream for funding of five new flood gauges, three CCTV cameras and development of a community flood dashboard. Lismore City Council's application was not supported as the floodplain risk management study is yet to be finalised. Lismore City Council will be eligible to reapply once the flood risk management plan is complete.

QUESTION 2:

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Okay, got you. I will direct this question to you. Is there an actual time line with milestones for completing that planning process?

BRETT WHITWORTH: The planning process for the villages?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes, and then also for completing the project in its entirety.

BRETT WHITWORTH: I will deal with the first one. We have identified at least 20 sites and we have used the planning system to ensure that we can get an expedited process. We have identified 20 sites working with councils using predominantly Crown land or council land. Of those 20 sites, we have construction activity occurring on at least four of them and detailed design for a further nine.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I apologise for interrupting. Do you have a time line for the completion of these different stages?

BRETT WHITWORTH: *That is a challenge because the time line depends on the production of the pods and the delivery of the pods to the site. Those time lines keep changing. If you said, "Do you have a definitive time line at the moment?" they keep changing because we are trying to get acceleration out of the manufacturers.*

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: *Do you have an estimated completion date for that rollout? At the moment, realising that might change, what is your best estimate?*

BRETT WHITWORTH: *I'd really like to take that on notice because it does change from day to day. We obviously have pods and people in pods now, and it will be a progressive rollout over progressive sites. You are looking for an end—*

RESPONSE 2:

Approximately 800 temporary housing dwellings, such as modular homes and caravans have been procured by the NSW Government. Market analysis indicated a high demand for modular/relocatable housing and the market is saturated. The market analysis indicated a typical lead time of approximately 12 weeks to manufacture housing and there was no readily available stock.

The modular homes that have been secured are currently being manufactured and commenced delivery to sites in late April 2022. Delivery of the modules is forecast to continue until late November 2022. Construction of site services and preparation, including design and construction of services such as roads, water, sewer and electrical supply, to receive temporary housing is progressing on eight sites identified as being available to take the pods.

It is forecast that temporary housing will be commissioned, with residents progressively able to move into the temporary housing, through to late 2022.