

13/11/2012-kf

**Principal Council Officer, Committees
Legislative Council,
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street SYDNEY NSW 2000
Attention : Cathryn Cummins**



**Tumut Shire
COUNCIL**

Dear Cathryn,

Re : Your letter dated 6/11/2012 to the Mayor of Tumut Shire Council, regarding Councils submission into the Inquiry into the adequacy of water storages in NSW, a function of the Standing Committee on State Development.

In response to the above letter, the following information is provided. Please note that the yellow boxed questions are as transcribed from the inquiry held in Wagga on the 1/11/2012, and the responses to these questions on notice follow on.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: What is the membership of the Tumut River Advisory Committee [TRAC]?

Ms THOMSON: The Tumut River Advisory Committee, there is the Department of Water, I think; we have a lot of landowners on there; council has two representatives; there is a councillor representative and also a staff member. Mr Paul Mullins is on that. The new councillor is Scott Stevenson. He is the new member for TRAC.

CHAIR: Would you be able to supply us with a list of membership?

Ms THOMSON: Yes, certainly.

Under the current Terms of Reference, Tumut River Advisory Committee membership comprises:

Community - Organisations	No. of representatives
Tumut River Landowners Association	3
Tumut Region Tourism	1
Recreational User Groups	1
Customer Service Committee Southern Areas	1
Snowy Mountains Elders	1
Government - Organisations	
Tumut Shire Council	1
Gundagai Shire Council	1
Snowy Hydro	1
NSW Dept of Primary Industries (Fisheries)	1
NSW Office of Water	1
NSW State Water	1
TOTAL	13

However, the Tourism Industry, Recreational User Groups and Snowy Mountains Elders are not regular attendees.

One issue you raise in your submission is the lack of lead-time information on flooding events coming down the system, not only at Goobarragandra but also Adelong Creek, which goes further into the Murrumbidgee. Do you think there are enough gauging stations or measurement points in the upper catchment?

Ms THOMSON: No, and that was an issue that was raised very much by the SES. In fact, what happened with the significant event at the Goobarragandra is that that station was taken out and that was basically the end of the information coming through to the community. I do not know whether you wanted to make any comment.

Mr FLETCHER: It failed at six metres. The Goobarragandra is typically 1.5 to 2 metres. The gauging stations located in the bottom reaches of the Goobarragandra failed at six metres, and I believe the water went to 8.5.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: What about in Adelong Creek, which is a catchment?

Ms THOMSON: I do not think we have any gauging systems in the Adelong. Part of the problem there came from the significant rain event that came down from Batlow and the issue was it came so fast and so quick that the water had nowhere to go and that is when it flooded the main street. The creek literally became a river through the main street. My understanding—again I am happy to find out more detail and provide it to you—is that I am not aware of any of the recording areas in that location.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: It would be good if you could let us know, take it on notice.

Based on data provided by NSW Water, there are creek / river gauging stations at

- 1) *Adelong Creek , mid and lower creek // station sites 410152 and 410061*
- 2) *Goobragandra River, lower station site 410057, and a new site has just been installed over the last 6 months at Macs crossing, or app mid river, site 41000261*

Council and the local SES does not believe that there are enough gauging systems in the locality. The lack of data available to the Council and to SES is compounded by the fact that the Tumut River is not listed in the NSW State Flood Plan, and therefore the Bureau of Meteorology does not calculate flood height predictions for the river. See copy of letter below.

In addition to this Council would like to see an official BoM weather station installed at Tumut to assist with weather predictions, particularly during emergencies.

12 October, 2012
Ministry for Police and Emergency Services
PO Box 6976
Silverwater, NSW 2128

Att: State Emergency Management Committee

Dear Sir/Madam

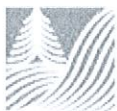
**State Flood Sub-Plan
Official Flood Warnings for Tumut River**

Following major flooding in the Tumut Valley in October, 2010 and again in March, 2012 it became evident that the Tumut River is not listed in the State Flood Sub-Plan as a river system subject to official flood warnings. Despite this omission, the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) has responded positively to requests by the State Emergency Service to supply predicted flood heights in the Tumut River. However, this co-operation by BoM cannot be guaranteed due to Tumut River not being included in the State Flood Sub-Plan.

The importance of official flood warnings cannot be overestimated. Floods cause millions of dollars in damage and directly impact on people's lives.

Council resolved, on 28 August, 2012, to request that the Tumut River be added to the State Flood Sub-Plan for the purpose of issuing official flood warnings. Please refer this request to the Flood Warning Consultative Committee.

Yours faithfully



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The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Your submission expresses concerns about the impact of cold water releases from Blowering Dam on the aquatic ecosystem of the Tumut River and indicates that a strategy has been developed to manage the impact of those releases. What impact do the cold-water releases have? What strategies have been developed to address these problems and what is their progress?

Ms THOMSON: I will answer the last part first. My understanding is that they are not being progressed at the moment; the cost is fairly prohibitive. In answer to the first part of the question, I have referred to it being an upside down river. When water is released from the bottom of the dam the temperature is significantly lower, so the impact on the river system and ecosystems is significant. I understand that one of the ways of addressing that is looking at mid-storage release. That involves drawing down water from different areas in the dam so that the water is not as cold. However, it is an extremely expensive process and is probably cost prohibitive.

Mr FLETCHER: They have done some exploration work on medium- to high-level take-offs. However, some of the ecosystem in the river is very much based on cold water temperature. Trout would not survive in warm water, but native species would. To some extent gross thermal pollution is occurring.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Is there an estimate of the cost of the off-take? Where could the Committee find that information?

Ms THOMSON: We could find it. The co-author of the report, Paul Mullins, is on leave at the moment. We could talk to him and get some of that information and detail and forward it to the Committee.

CHAIR: That would be good.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: We would like information about the planning or costing work that has been done on that. Jindabyne Dam has had one of those off-takes installed and it is working very well. However, it did cost a lot of money.

In 2011 Tumut River Advisory Committee expressed concern to the NSW Office of Water about cold water pollution in the Tumut River. Below is the letter of response. Until an investigation has been undertaken the cost-v-benefit of installing a variable take-off structure at Blowering Dam is unknown.



Office of Water

Mr Paul Mullins
 Chairperson
 Tumut River Advisory Committee
 Tumut Shire Council
 76 Capper Street
 TUMUT NSW 2720

TUMUT SHIRE COUNCIL

FILE NO Cold Water Pollution

SCAN NO _____

DOC ID _____

RECEIVED - 8 JUL 2011

	INFO

File ref: CW11/193

Rebate to doc fee - 256.756.

Dear Mr Mullins

Thank you for your letter of 2 May 2011 seeking clarification of timeframes for Stage 2 Cold Water Pollution Strategy investigations in the Murrumbidgee River Valley.

The State Water Corporation is responsible for undertaking mitigation works for cold water pollution at Blowering Dam. It is a member of the Interagency Group on Cold Water Pollution and works closely with the Group to assess options for mitigation of cold water pollution.

Although Blowering Dam is a priority for investigation under Stage 2 investigations, it is difficult to provide specific timeframes because funding is dependent on the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) determinations, and specific NSW Rivers Environmental Restoration Program funded projects. IPART decided in its 2010 State Water pricing determination that a more cautious approach should be adopted to new cold water pollution mitigation technology by first testing the method at Burrendong Dam. This would confirm the effectiveness of the approach before rolling it out at other sites.

Therefore, the implementation of further cold water pollution schemes will take place after the Burrendong Dam cold water pollution scheme has been completed, which is scheduled for 2014. Also, as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), or a State-based regulator accredited by the ACCC, will undertake State Water's next pricing determination for valleys within the Murray-Darling Basin, cold water mitigation work will be subject to State Water receiving appropriate funding under that determination, which will take effect from 1 July 2014.

Should you have further enquiries about this matter, Mr Allan Raine can be contacted at the NSW Office of Water's Newcastle Office on telephone number (02) 4904 2565.

Yours sincerely



6.7.2011

David Harriss
 Commissioner, NSW Office of Water

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I am interested in the impact of the cold water. Does someone establish whether the trout population is decreasing? What measurements are taken to assess these impacts?
Ms THOMSON: I cannot answer that off the top of my head. We can take that question on notice.

Tumut Shire Council does not have knowledge of or access to this information. The NSW Department of Primary Industries (Fisheries Office) was contacted on the 6/11/2012 and Ken Fletcher spoke to the local fishing officer (Tony Day 0408 484 299).

"Trout like cold water, a high level take off could have a moderate to potentially serious impact on these fish.

This will depend on the water off take depth from the surface, and the depth of the overall dam at the time.

The native fish could make a resurgence in numbers and species with an increase in average water temperature.

To the best of his knowledge, a study into the effects of cold water on fish has not been done in the Tumut .

There has been one done in the Murrumbidgee on the impacts of the cold water on native fish."

I trust that this information fully satisfies the questions posed by the committee. If any further information or clarification is required, please feel free to contact the author, Ken Fletcher 0269 412 532, or email kfletcher@tumut.nsw.gov.au.

Yours faithfully,

Ken Fletcher
Waste & Environment Officer