

7 January 2020

The Hon. Matthew Kean
Minister for Energy and Environment
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Email: office@kean.minister.nsw.gov.au

Dear Minister Kean

Re: North Wagga Wagga Floodplain Risk Management and Feasibility Studies

I refer to the issue of flood mitigation measures for the area of North Wagga Wagga. I note the Government has provided funding for the following feasibility studies:

1. 2014-15-FM-0130 (\$131020.67 grant + \$65,510.33 Council = \$196,531)
2. 2018-19-FM-0071 (\$156,000 grant + \$78,000 Council = \$234,000)

The studies were the outcome of the process undertaken in accordance with the NSW Floodplain Risk Management Program.

As you might be aware, Council has received significant representation from the North Wagga Residents Association requesting an investigation of a flood protection levee which would protect the area of North Wagga during floods that exceed a 1 in 20-year event.

While the Floodplain Risk Management Advisory Committee did not recommend that such a levee be investigated further, this is not supported by the North Wagga Residents Association (The Association).

The Association submits that they did not have an adequate voice in the discussions to date. They are requesting an opportunity to exercise their voice in a meaningful feasibility investigation into a levee to protect North Wagga in larger flood events. They refer to an aspiration for a 1 in 100-year flood protection levee however, they also note that something less might be the outcome. The community members represented by the Association simply seek a forum to participate in the consideration of a levee, which provides greater protection than a 1 in 20-year event.

NSW Public Works produced a report in 2015 which included some community consultation and it recommended a 1 in 100-year levee protection for North Wagga Wagga.

This report did not follow the NSW Flood Management Guidelines. It was the starting point for the Wagga Wagga Revised Murrumbidgee River Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan (April 2018). This Plan ultimately recommended a course of action and did not recommend the 1 in 100-year levee which has been recommended by the NSW Public Works.

It is perhaps understandable however, that the North Wagga community feel aggrieved that one government department recommends a 1 in 100-year levee protection and the subsequent process following the NSW Floodplain Risk Management Manual does not.

The purpose of this letter is to request that the NSW Government provide additional funding to expand the feasibility study for a 1 in 20-year levee to include consideration of more significant events up to and including a 1 in 100-year event.

Whilst this is a departure from the usual process, it is requested in circumstances where a community feel strongly that they have been denied a genuine voice in the process. They have a NSW Government report prepared after the last significant flood event which recommends a 1 in 100-year flood levee. The request to participate in a targeted process to consider a levee to protect the area from a more significant event is understandable and Council asks that funding be provided to achieve this outcome.

In terms of costs, we can request the provider of the services for the 1 in 20-year feasibility study to provide a variation to include the additional work.

It should be noted that some members of the community oppose a 1 in 100-year levee for North Wagga Wagga.

A transparent, open and fair process will provide a voice to all. I commend this to you as a way forward.

Yours faithfully

Peter Thompson
General Manager