Our Ref: ID2763
Your Ref: SSI-50831979

13 November 2024

Drew Anderson
Department of Planning, Housing & Infrastructure
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124
Via Major Portal

email: Drew.Anderson@dpie.nsw.gov.au
CC: joshua.stanbury@ses.nsw.gov.au

Dear Drew,

Environmental Impact Assessment for Billabong Creek Environmental Water Regulators – State Significant Infrastructure

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Flood Impact Assessment for Yanco Creek Modernisation Project proposed by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (NSW DCCEEW). It is understood that the proposal involves the replacement of two existing weirs along Billabong Creek with new regulators including fishways. The two existing weirs - the Hartwood Weir and Wanganella Weir, situated on Billabong Creek within the Yanco Creek system in south-west NSW, are to be demolished. The new environmental regulators would be fully automated and remotely operable meaning river operators could control flow remotely which would increase the efficiency of flow control in Billabong Creek.[1]

It is understood that construction of the proposal is anticipated to start in 2025 and be completed by 2026, with an estimated construction period of around 18 months, noting that construction would pause during periods of high flow.[2]

The NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES) is the agency responsible for dealing with floods, storms and tsunami in NSW. This role includes, planning for, responding to and coordinating the initial recovery from floods. As such, the NSW SES has an interest in the public safety aspects of the development of flood prone land, particularly the potential for changes to land use to either exacerbate existing flood risk or create new flood risk for communities in NSW.

It is understood the Billabong Creek and large surrounding catchments high flow events are typically slow rising with surrounding floodplains becoming gradually inundated for extended periods of time. We note that this behaviour is similar both around the Hartwood and Wanganella regulators.[3]

[1] 3Rivers. 2024. Flood Impact Assessment – Billabong Creek Regulators
[2] 3Rivers. 2024. Flood Impact Assessment – Billabong Creek Regulators, page 5
[3] 3Rivers. 2024. Flood Impact Assessment – Billabong Creek Regulators, page 24-25

We note that the works involve the decommissioning of the two existing weirs, using coffer dams to provide a dry work area during removal of the old structures and construction of the new regulators, while flow would be allowed to pass through on the other side. We also understand that as part of the Wanganella Weir works, a flood bypass channel on the floodplain within Wanganella Reserve will be constructed.[4]

We note the Flood Impact Assessment concluded:

- Flood modelling has been developed for operational and flood flows up to and including the PMF to assess and measure the potential impacts and has considered the impacts of climate change. As there are no changes to the existing flooding there are no changes to the existing emergency management, evacuation and access. Contingency measures remain current and relevant (where they exist) and no new community emergency management arrangements for flooding are identified.
- There is minimal change (generally less than ±50 mm) in flow and water surface levels across all operational and flood flow events, including the PMF event, within and around the township of Conargo, which is the nearest populated area to the proposed Hartwood Weir.[5]
- The area close to the proposed Wanganella Weir, between Billabong Creek and Lang Street in Wanganella township, appears to experience moderate flood level increases (approximately +68 mm) during 20% AEP events, and minor increases (approximately +16 mm) in 5% AEP events.
- No impacts were identified during the 1% AEP events or greater, having the flood relief channel in place. However, the impacts identified do not appear to be affecting buildings in Wanganella township due to the steep slope from Billabong Creek to Lang Street.[6] Therefore, concluding that the current flood risk in these areas is unlikely to be impacted by the proposed regulators.

We refer to our previous response dated 27 May 2024 with reference ID2432**.** In summary, we emphasise ensuring that workers and people on site are aware of the flood risk in these areas and a flood emergency plan is in place during construction and operation/maintenance of the weirs. If there is an expectation of flooding at the site, we recommend workers are prepared to secure all materials and equipment and close the site early to minimise risk to life and property in a flood event.

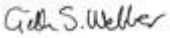
In addition, if the construction phase causes disruption to the operation of local roads, this may impact the ability for emergency vehicles to use these routes. The NSW SES requests that notification be provided where there are likely to be significant delays in the operation of the roads affected by the proposed works.

Please feel free to contact Ana Chitu via email at rra@ses.nsw.gov.au should you wish to discuss any of the matters raised in this correspondence. The NSW SES would also be

[4] 3Rivers. 2024. Flood Impact Assessment – Billabong Creek Regulators, page 26 & 32
[5] 3Rivers. 2024. Flood Impact Assessment – Billabong Creek Regulators, page 29
[6] 3Rivers. 2024. Flood Impact Assessment – Billabong Creek Regulators, page 34

interested in receiving future correspondence regarding the outcome of this referral via this email address.

Yours sincerely,



Gillian Webber

Planning Coordinator Risk Assessment - Regional

NSW State Emergency Service