

Wilcannia Weir Replacement

Outcomes report

**Engagement with Wilcannia Aboriginal Communities
to review the Environmental Impact Statement for
the Wilcannia Weir replacement project**

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Barkindji people as the Traditional Custodians of the Country on which the town of Wilcannia is located and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the ongoing connection that Barkindji people have to this Country and the Baaka (Darling River). We are grateful to have the opportunity to hear from the community during this process regarding their aspirations for connecting with the Baaka through the weir project.

The current weir provides an important community gathering place and is used for recreation and cultural practice. It will be important to ensure that Barkindji people's feedback included in this report is embedded into the final project outcomes.



(Proposed site for the new Wilcannia weir. Photo – Martin Bass)

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Background and context

Water Infrastructure NSW is currently preparing for the construction of a new weir for the town of Wilcannia in far western NSW. The proposed new weir, first announced in November 2018, will replace the existing weir on the Baaka (Darling River) but will be located around five kilometres down river (south) from the existing weir.

The pool created by the existing weir is a primary water source for Wilcannia communities. Despite a major refurbishment in 1987, the weir structure is dilapidated. With a section of the weir wall having collapsed, the structure is now unable to hold water at its intended capacity. This in turn has created serious water supply issues for the town during times of drought.

In addition, the Baaka is at the heart of the Barkindji peoples' identity and connection with their country. The weir and weir pool are currently located upriver from the Wilcannia urban area and local Aboriginal communities are vocal about their distress and sadness during drought conditions, when the water level is low.

Another significant issue is that the weir pool is a significant local recreation site, providing a venue for swimming and fishing activities. The low water levels during times of drought, compounded by the partial collapse of the weir wall, limit the pursuit of these recreation activities and create an unwelcoming environment in the vicinity of the river. These are primary factors underlying the determination to construct the new weir.

As the proponent of the project, Water Infrastructure NSW (WINSW) prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and associated documents addressing all aspects of the proposed new weir and its operation. Public exhibition of these documents commenced on Monday 18 July 2022 and public submissions were accepted from that date until Sunday 14 August 2022.

The role of the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) is to assess the overall merits of the proposal, to receive public submissions during the exhibition period and to ensure that all significant issues received during the exhibition period are responded to and addressed by WINSW through project updates and appropriate conditions of approval.

Engaging with Aboriginal communities to review of the EIS

Public submissions in response to the EIS were to be submitted online via the DPE Planning Portal. However, DPE staff recognised the difficulties and challenges that would be encountered by Aboriginal communities in Wilcannia, in lodging their submissions online.

On this basis DPE commissioned Zion Engagement and Planning P/L (Elle Davidson) and Helicopter View P/L (Martin Bass) (the consultants) to design and manage appropriate on-site engagement processes with Aboriginal communities in Wilcannia.

The objective was to ensure that Aboriginal communities were provided with ample opportunities to review and discuss the EIS and associated documents during the exhibition period and provide their feedback.

This report provides an account of these engagement processes and the feedback received from Aboriginal communities and individuals in relation to relevant aspects of the EIS and associated documents. DPE will consider the contents of this report as a summary of feedback raised by the community during our targeted engagement program.

Focus of engagement

The EIS and associated documents provide a detailed technical description of the proposed new weir and its operation. In addition, these documents provide a detailed account of the anticipated impacts of the proposed new weir during construction and operation in environmental, ecological, economic, social and cultural contexts.

The documents also provide a detailed account of the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the area and a log of significant cultural sites, features and artefacts identified in areas in the vicinity of the site for the proposed new weir.

In discussion with DPE staff, it was determined that on-site engagement with local Aboriginal communities would focus on defined areas of the EIS and associated documents, with which people would have a clear understanding and connection. These included:

1. Location and height of the proposed new weir and associated infrastructure
2. Protection of sensitive cultural sites in the vicinity of the new weir
3. Inclusion, design and location of facilities and amenities at the site
4. Access to the new weir and immediate surrounds for Aboriginal communities
5. Visitor access to the weir and surrounds (tourism)
6. Changes to the environment – existing weir, construction of the new weir, weir pool, fish way, Community River Place
7. Weir construction - local participation / employment opportunities

In discussion between DPE staff and consultants it was determined that all of the above points were to be addressed in discussion with the Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) for the weir project. Discussions with broader communities were to be focused on points 1, 3, 6 and 7 as listed above. Discussion on any relevant topics, including but not limited to those listed above, were to be pursued if raised by participants during any meetings.

Engagement planning

With the public exhibition release date for the EIS being set for Monday 18 July 2022, on-site engagement activities were scheduled for the week commencing Monday 25 July 2022. All activities were designed around face-to-face discussions with communities and individuals with the following groups identified for approach and invitation:

- Wilcannia Weir project Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs)
- Wilcannia Mission community
- Wilcannia Mallee community
- Wilcannia Top End community
- Wilcannia general community (BBQ)
- Wilcannia Regional Enterprise Development Institute (REDI.E) trainees group
- Wilcannia TAFE students

In the course of organising the community meetings, the consultants approached a Wilcannia community leader and staff in the Wilcannia office of REDI.E to seek their assistance in distributing written information about the meetings and talk to communities to raise local awareness in this regard. Funding was included in the budget to provide remuneration for on-site assistance.

The initial engagement schedule was designed with all activities to be held between Monday 25 July and Wednesday 27 July in outdoor locations central to each community. Additionally, the community BBQ was to be located close to the centre of town in Baker Park. Meetings with REDI.E and TAFE trainees were planned to be held in the training facilities of each agency.

In the days leading up to the planned engagement activities, a range of circumstances came to light necessitating changes to the meeting schedule. In addition, the weather forecast for the period in question predicted rain periods in Wilcannia over the days earmarked for engagement. Accordingly, all engagement activities were rescheduled and relocated to the REDI.E facilities. REDI.E staff assisted in the preparation of community BBQs to support each event.

Local participation in engagement activities

The following is an account of the schedule of meetings held and attendance numbers:

- Saturday 23 July, 11.30am - community meeting - 11 participants (including 1 RAP)
- Monday 25 July, 10.30am - RAP meeting – 1 RAP
- Monday 25 July, 11.30am - community meeting – 13 participants

- Tuesday 26 July, 12.30pm – Community member meeting – 1 participant
- Tuesday 26 July, 1.30pm - TAFE students meeting – 4 participants
- **Total participation – 30 people.**

Engagement outcomes

Summary of primary engagement outcomes

The following is an account of the primary issues, ideas and suggestions that emerged during the engagement events. These points are highlighted based on the higher number of participants who raised and discussed each issue and the correspondingly higher number of comments recorded.

1. Protection of sensitive cultural sites in the vicinity of the new weir

- Erect fencing to protect scar trees, hearth sites and other features of cultural sensitivity.
- Install signage to inform visitors about the nature of their significance.
- Consider locating facilities and amenities on the southern side of the river (via Yoeval Station) to create an alternate visitor site - better protection for culturally sensitive sites in the vicinity of the weir and Community River Place.

2. Access to the new weir and immediate surrounds for Aboriginal communities

- Local Aboriginal communities want a meeting place and associated facilities close to the weir, separate to the Community River Place.
- Aboriginal communities will clear a meeting place for themselves at the weir and install makeshift amenities if such an area is not included in the design and construction of the weir.
- the existing weir is a 'playground' for local communities and that the new weir needs to be designed to fulfil a similar role.
- Fishing is one of the primary activities they engage in at the existing weir and will be at the new site. Communities will fish at the weir rather than at the Community River Place.

3. Visitor access to the weir and surrounds (tourism)

- The new weir and Community River Place will have a positive impact on local tourism.
- There is potential for cultural information and education resources at the weir site.

- Tourism activities will need to be managed carefully in regard to sensitive cultural sites in the vicinity and the cleanliness of the area.

4. Weir construction and management - local participation / employment opportunities

- By the end of 2022, there will be 35 young people who will have completed training courses in preparation for the construction of the new weir. Trainees must be given employment priority.
- Employment opportunities were identified in construction of roads and lay-down areas, earth works and construction of the weir, cultural heritage assessment and construction site monitoring.
- Employment roles also need to include opportunities to progress to supervisory or other higher duties.
- Potential for ongoing employment in relation to the new weir in site maintenance, cultural tourism, etc.
- Strong need for direct community involvement in scope preparation and awarding of the tender for construction of the weir, and drafting of the agreement with the contractor(s) to include local employment requirements.

Detailed account of engagement outcomes

The following is an account of comments and feedback received during community meetings, meetings with RAPs and the meeting with TAFE students. Participant comments and feedback are categorised within the seven focus points and include synthesised feedback and direct quotes from participants. Subcategories are presented within each discussion point, based on the primary issues raised by participants. Direct quotes, where obtained, are listed following the synthesised feedback on each issue and appear with quotation marks in blue italics.

1. Location and height of the proposed new weir and associated infrastructure

1.1 Weir location: Participants were overall happy with the proposed location of the new weir. Comments were received to indicate that, whilst it is not as central to the urban area as the existing weir, the new site will still be accessible to the local community and would create a weir pool through the town rather than upriver where it currently is.

Some participants also commented on the potential for the new weir to have a positive impact on aquatic and land-based wildlife, encouraging the return of fish, birdlife and other animals in greater numbers.

A number of participants expressed their frustration at the length of time it has taken to progress the design and planning of the weir proposal.

Participant quotes:

“Change and renewal is good – the new weir will bring good times for us.”

“The river is for everyone. The new weir will be very good for local people.”

“The new weir will be positive in attracting more fish and wildlife – more water will be good in restoring their numbers.”

“We’re sick of hearing about the new weir – they’ve been talking about it for so many years – we want it done – we’ve been waiting so many years.”

1.2 Weir height: The additional height of the new weir (one meter) over the height of the existing weir was regarded as a positive design feature as it will retain more water in the river in the vicinity of the town. It will also facilitate increased fish stocks in the weir pool.

Participant quotes:

“Higher weir means more water for Wilcannia.”

“One meter higher is good – keep more water for us.”

“Higher water means more fish here – that’s good.”

“The new height is good but the river still needs to flow.”

“The river is very important for us, for our mental health. It’s good to go to the water when we’re depressed.”

“The new weir will be very good for our communities – it will connect us to river and Country.”

1.3 Lake Woytchugga: In addition, one participant expressed concern that the new weir may have a negative impact on Lake Woytchugga. The design of the new weir will prevent the water in the river from being high enough to fill the lake.

Participant quote:

“The water in the river needs to be 11 meters high to flow into Lake Woytchugga. The new weir will not allow the water level to be high enough. There’s no management strategy for the lake and how it could fill in the future.”

2. Protection of sensitive cultural sites in the vicinity of the new weir:

2.1 Protection of heritage sites and features: Participants offered their suggestions and ideas regarding the protection of sensitive sites in the vicinity of the new weir. These included the addition of fencing and signage to protect scar trees, hearth sites and other features of cultural sensitivity and to inform visitors about the nature of their significance.

Participants also felt that providing facilities and amenities on the southern side would provide better protection for culturally sensitive sites in the vicinity of the weir and Community River Place.

Participant quotes:

"There should be signs at all sensitive sites."

"Scar trees and hearth sites should be fenced off, marked and signposted."

"There should be signs near sensitive sites. They should be fenced off with signs telling history and stories."

"They should consider using the southern access road – it would be ideal for tourists – less interference with sensitive sites."

"Trail bikes should be banned from the area – they do so much damage."

2.2 Proximity of the weir site to the cemetery: Some participants expressed concerns about the proximity of the new weir and associated infrastructure to the cemetery. Their concern is that increased human presence in the vicinity of the cemetery may encourage encroachment on the cemetery site which is a sacred place for local Aboriginal communities.

Participant quote:

"We need to be careful not to attract tourists to the cemetery – it should be left alone."

3. Inclusion, design and location of facilities and amenities at the site

3.1 Community River Place: Participants were positive about the creation of the Community River Place as a recreation area and point of interest for visitors to Wilcannia. However, all participants expressed their wishes for facilities and amenities additional to those indicated in the EIS and associated documents. Additional facilities and amenities identified by participants during discussion included the following:

- A playground for children
- Seating and tables with shade and rain protection
- Toilets
- BBQs
- Fire pits
- Bicycle stand
- Drinking water
- Rubbish bins

- Boat ramp
- Floating pier

Participant quotes:

"We thought the River Place was going to be close to the weir."

"We need toilets and BBQs there and lots of good play equipment for our kids"

"Families will spend whole days there. We need good facilities there like bins, toilets and BBQs – maybe even a compost."

3.2 Southern side (Yoeval Station) access and amenities:

Some participants expressed the view that visitor areas should be established on both sides of the river. In such circumstances, there would be more options and space for local communities and visitors.

Participants observed that road access on the southern side of the river, via Yoeval Station, is being prepared for construction of the weir and that this road and the construction site could be adapted for community use following the completion of construction.

Participant quotes:

"The Land Council manages Yoeval Station so access would be possible. We have had discussions about this and it might be good to look at it – use the Yoeval site house to manage visitation."

"There should be a visitor area on the south side – somewhere a bit further from the river that's safer for little kids to play. Some of them can't swim."

"We should have proper, safe meeting places on both sides of the river and the weir."

4. Access to the new weir and immediate surrounds for Aboriginal communities

4.1 Weir site access: Almost all participants in the engagement events expressed the view that whilst the Community River Place will be good as a recreation area and focal point for visitors, local Aboriginal communities need a separate meeting place close to the weir.

Observations were made that the existing weir is a 'playground' for local communities and that the new weir needs to be designed to fulfil a similar role.

Participants expressed the view that fishing is one of the primary activities they engage in at the existing weir and will do the same at the new site. They emphasised that they will fish at the weir rather than at the Community River Place.

It was highlighted by several participants in this discussion that if such an area is not included in the design and construction of the weir, it is inevitable that local Aboriginal communities will clear a meeting place for themselves at the weir and

install makeshift amenities such as seating, BBQs and a fish cleaning facility. Participants said that this may create potential hazards for visitors to the site and for the weir infrastructure.

Participant quotes:

"The old weir is a playground for local people. They need to design the new weir for this, not just the Community River Place."

"We need a separate place for locals, especially with Corona Virus around – somewhere more private and sacred for our community."

"Elders want to be close to the weir – fish there and have cook-ups."

"If an area is not prepared for people close to the weir, they with clear it for themselves and make the area what they need."

"We will go to the weir, not the Community River Place."

"The Community River Place will be good for tourists but we won't go there. We want a place of our own near the weir."

"There's lots of fishing and yabbing at the weir now – make the new weir the same."

"There'll be fish upstream and downstream of the weir. There should be areas for people to fish on both sides."

"We have fish traps at the old weir – we want to be able to build traps at the new weir too."

"The new weir should be a safe place for people to go. Everyone has their own fishing place – the weir will attract people for fishing and swimming – it should be a safe place for this."

"The new weir needs to be more accessible than the old one. The old weir has steep banks – all washed away. They need to ensure washout doesn't happen at the new site. We have to slide down the bank to the old weir – it's really dangerous for kids."

4.2 Weir site facilities and amenities: Participants also expressed strong wishes that a meeting place at the new weir site be equipped with similar facilities and amenities to those they would like at the Community River Place. Participants listed the following inclusions for consideration:

- Seating with shade protection
- Toilets
- BBQ
- Fire pit
- Fish cleaning facilities

Participant quotes:

"We have already asked for toilets, BBQs and a fish cleaning area close to the weir."

"The Community River Place will be good for tourists but we want a place for us – a place to meet and fish with seats and shelter."

"We should have a yarning circle at the new weir."

"We want fish cleaning facilities at the weir, like at Nyngan."

5. Visitor access to the weir and surrounds (tourism)

5.1 Tourist access: Participants universally agreed that the new weir and Community River Place will have a positive impact on local tourism and will draw visitors to the site itself and to Wilcannia.

A range of suggestions and ideas were discussed regarding the potential for cultural information and education resources at the weir site. Participants suggested that these resources may include interpretive signage, cultural tours and other visitor education tools. Feedback was also received to the effect that the weir and the planned Baaka Cultural Centre could be connected as places that provide cultural information and education for visitors.

Additionally, participants believed that tourism activities will need to be managed carefully to ensure that visitors act responsibly in regard to their respect for local Aboriginal communities, awareness of sensitive cultural sites in the vicinity and maintaining the cleanliness of the area.

Some participants also suggested that sensitive cultural sites and the nearby cemetery may be better protected by locating tourism facilities on the southern side of the river.

Participant quotes:

"The community River Place will be a good place for tourists to visit and see our river."

"The weir could be a good place for visitor education. There could be signs with pictures and stories about the Rainbow Serpent and how the river was made."

"We could have signs at the Community River Place with information about local fish and wildlife with their Aboriginal names."

"The weir site should have signs and information about our heritage and culture – local animals, Aboriginal language and interpretation."

"Good site for cultural tourism – good to have signage but needs to go way back in time – talk about our ancestors that were here."

"White fellas are learning through school but that's no good. The weir site would be a good place to learn from local people – a place for cultural tourism."

"The weir could work in with the Baaka Centre to provide cultural education at the site."

"Tourists are good but they must keep the area clean."

"Tourists won't always do the right thing."

"What are the opportunities to put tourism facilities on the southern side – via Yoeval – to provide added protection for the cemetery and sensitive cultural sites?"

5.2 Tourism infrastructure: Participants provided feedback mainly indicating that whilst the Community River Place has potential as a local tourist attraction, it needs more facilities and amenities than indicated in the EIS, to attract visitors.

Participant quotes:

"The Community River Place will be good for tourism but the site needs better facilities – modern facilities."

NOTE – ref section 3.1 Community River Place, for details of suggested facilities and amenities.

6. Changes to the environment – existing weir, construction of the new weir, weir pool, fish way, Community River Place

6.1 Existing weir: Some participants expressed the view that the old weir is a significant site for local Aboriginal communities. Despite its disrepair, many expressed the wish for as much of the weir to be left in situ. They acknowledged that some of the structure will be relocated to the new weir site and were happy with this decision.

Participant quotes:

"There are a lot of memories for us in the old weir – good to leave some of it there and good to move some of it to the new site."

"The old weir is falling apart – we can't swim there anymore. There are too many rocks under the water."

"The old weir is special – it should not be disturbed – it should be all left in place."

6.2 Adjacent properties and water levels: Some participants raised questions regarding any effect the new weir and consequent higher water level may have on dwellings and properties in the vicinity of the weir pool.

Participant quote:

"Will higher water level affect people in houses nearby? What will happen in floods?"

6.3 Water flow and toxicity: Comments were contributed that the raised height of the weir will only be good if the river is flowing. If there's no water in the river, the height of the weir will not improve conditions for them. Participants said that a lack of flow will potentially increase the volume of stagnant water in town, the toxicity of

the water through chemicals entering the river upstream and the presence of blue-green algae in the weir pool.

Participants observed that the higher weir pool will attract children and young people who will still want to swim at times when the river may not be flowing and the water may have higher levels of toxicity.

In addition, concerns were raised about the inadequacy of the town storm water and sewerage systems and the potential for untreated runoff and sewerage to overflow into the weir pool when storms and heavy rains occur.

Participant quotes:

"When the water is low, it goes green – then it's poisonous. We can't use it or swim when it's like that."

"There could be issues if sewerage is washed into the river, or water from town when there are storms."

"When the cotton growers up stream release water, it has lots of chemicals in it that come down the river and are really poisonous to swim in."

6.4 Erosion: Participants raised concerns about the potential for the new weir and weir pool to cause increased erosion of the riverbanks. Some recounted that the banks of the Baaka have been gradually collapsing, causing the river to widen and the river channel deepen. Mud on the riverbed is also deeper at times. Concerns were expressed that the raised height of the new weir may exacerbate these erosion issues.

Participant quotes:

"Menindee weir gates are opened to far and too quickly, the river flows too fast and it causes erosion hers. The operation of our new weir must be co-ordinated with the Menindee weir."

"I've seen the river get deeper and wider with erosion over many years, as the water flows and then dries up. The wet and dry banks are no good – causes erosion."

"Wilcannia is stuck in the middle - Bourke pumps water out and Menindee lets water go and it all does too much damage for us. There can be 15 feet of mud on the bottom when the river is low."

6.5 Weir construction - interpretive design contributions: Participants suggested that totems and designs prepared by local children could be imprinted in the new weir infrastructure.

Participant quote:

"Great if the weir could have imprints of our kids' totems and designs – really good for town pride and for our kids in being part of building the weir."

6.6 Fishway: Participants were generally positive about the design of the fishway as part of the new weir and its capacity to enable fish to move past the weir.

Participant quote:

"The new weir will enable better water management and the fishway will be good for the movement of fish in the vicinity of the weir."

6.7 Community River Place and flooding: Several participants also expressed concerns about the height of the Community River Place and access to the area in general when the river water level is high.

Participant quote:

"What will happen when it floods? Will the Community River Place be under water?"

7. Weir construction and management - local participation / employment opportunities

7.1 Training: Participants said that by the end of 2022, there will be 35 young people who will have completed various training courses in preparation for the construction of the new weir. Training has included White Card, First Aid, Work Health and Safety and Money Matters. All participants were adamant that these trainees must be given employment priority in the construction of the weir.

Participants recounted that TAFE has been involved for many years in training and preparation for the weir. As a result, the whole town is aware of the weir project and the local jobs that will be created.

Additionally, participants clarified that many of the trainees have not worked for many years and will need close guidance and support to establish sound work practices and ethics.

Participant quotes:

"We'll have 35 kids trained by the end of the year – they have to be a priority for employment on the weir."

"Many trainees have had years of not working. We must address issues around developing good work ethics and this must be done early on. It's not been taken seriously enough in training so far – if it's not addressed, our young workforce will not last – we're just setting them up to fail."

7.2 Employment: Participants were vocal about the need for all agencies involved in planning and construction of the weir honouring their promises about the employment of local Aboriginal young people in construction work.

Participants recounted that agreement was made in writing about employment of local people in construction of the weir.

Employment opportunities were identified in construction of roads and lay-down areas, earth works and construction of the weir, cultural heritage assessment and

construction site monitoring. Employment roles also need to include opportunities to progress to supervisory or other higher duties.

Participants also highlighted the potential of the new weir in creating ongoing employment in areas such as site maintenance and cultural tourism.

Participants also cited the need for a local employment supervisor to provide co-ordination, leadership and guidance for young people employed on the project.

Participant quotes:

"We want to see it being fair for our young people – give them employment opportunities."

"Employment of our young people must be a priority – we have agreements in writing that this will happen."

"Our young boys need motivation – reasons to get out of bed. Even if they don't like the work, they'll have some experience. They all know each other too and get on well – they'll make a good team."

"There'll be a lot of town pride in being part of building the new weir."

"Our young people need to be given opportunities for higher work - supervisory roles – not just the shit-kickers' jobs."

"There should be opportunities for ongoing employment for local people – tourism, site monitoring, maintenance – these roles should be created."

"There needs to be a local employee supervisor to guide the kids working on the weir – someone to make sure they do well in their work and are treated fair."

7.3 Tender and contract preparation: Participants were strong in expressing the need for sound processes in preparation and scoping of the tender for construction of the weir and drafting of the agreement with the contractor(s). There was strong consensus that there should be direct local community involvement in these stages of the process.

One participant with central involvement in the design and delivery of local training and employment programs elaborated that the tender process, if not well managed, is likely to create significant problems and hostility in Wilcannia. This will arise if contractors are not operating under strict agreements regarding local employment numbers.

The same participant also stated that there should be better co-ordination of tender processes for projects in Wilcannia as there is a local workforce trained and ready to be deployed for upcoming construction projects.

Additionally, the strong view amongst participants was that the tender and contract(s) for the weir needs to be prepared with unambiguous language to ensure there is clear intent and binding agreement regarding local employment numbers.

Participant quotes

"There needs to be local oversight of tender and contract documents to ensure the inclusion of local people. There were deals made between Water NSW, REDI.E and TAFE about this."

"We need local reps' involvement in assessing tenders and making the selection."

"The local community wants to be involved in briefing the selected contractors to set agreements about employment of local people."

"The tender process will create problems. We have 12 young people trained in Construction Certificates 1 and 2. Problems will arise possibly in contractors not employing these trainees if the contract is based on a percentage of local staff. The tender needs to guarantee local employment in good numbers."

"There's a problem in local projects being managed under separate tenders. The jobs are the same but under different management. We have the Baaka Centre construction, the Well Being Centre, the Drop-in Centre and other local projects coming up - our local workforce should be used across all local projects."

"Contracts should state a priority list of people to be employed and be clear about local employment. No language like 'if possible' or 'where available'. There must be clear words about local employment."

Recommendations

Primary issues

The following recommendations are made in relation to the primary issues that emerged during the engagement process:

- Protective measures be installed at sensitive cultural sites in the vicinity of the new weir, including fencing and signage.
- Landscape design of the site include a meeting place for Aboriginal communities at the new weir, in addition to the Community River Place.
- Consideration be given to the addition of appropriate safety measures to address the likely event of human activity, such as swimming and fishing, in close proximity to the new weir.
- Further engagement be conducted with Aboriginal communities to identify additional facilities and amenities for the Community River Place and the proposed meeting place at the weir.
- A range of appropriate cultural information and education resources for tourists and visitors be developed and installed at the Community River Place and surrounds.

- Aboriginal community representatives be included in the development of tenders and contracts for construction of the weir
- Tenders and contracts for weir construction clearly stipulate the number of local people to be employed in construction processes and stages.
- Priority be given to local people who have completed training courses in preparation for construction of the weir.

Other issues

The following recommendations are made in relation to the other issues that emerged during the engagement process:

- The proponent work with Aboriginal representatives to further investigate options to facilitate the flow of water into Lake Woytchugga.
- The proponent work with local Aboriginal communities to develop appropriate mechanisms to protect the nearby cemetery from human encroachment emanating from the weir site.
- Information be provided to local Aboriginal communities to address their concerns in relation the management and minimisation of erosion of the river banks and the incidence of high toxicity levels in the river.

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