

# Expansion of water fill stations (update)

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning & Delivery (Andrew Logan)

## Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receive and note the update report.
2. Approve the two public access fill stations as a permanent water supply for the community.

## Background

In December 2019, in response to prolonged drought conditions in the region, Council approved the installation of two public access water fill stations at South Lismore and Bangalow and the installation of an additional two bulk water fill stations.

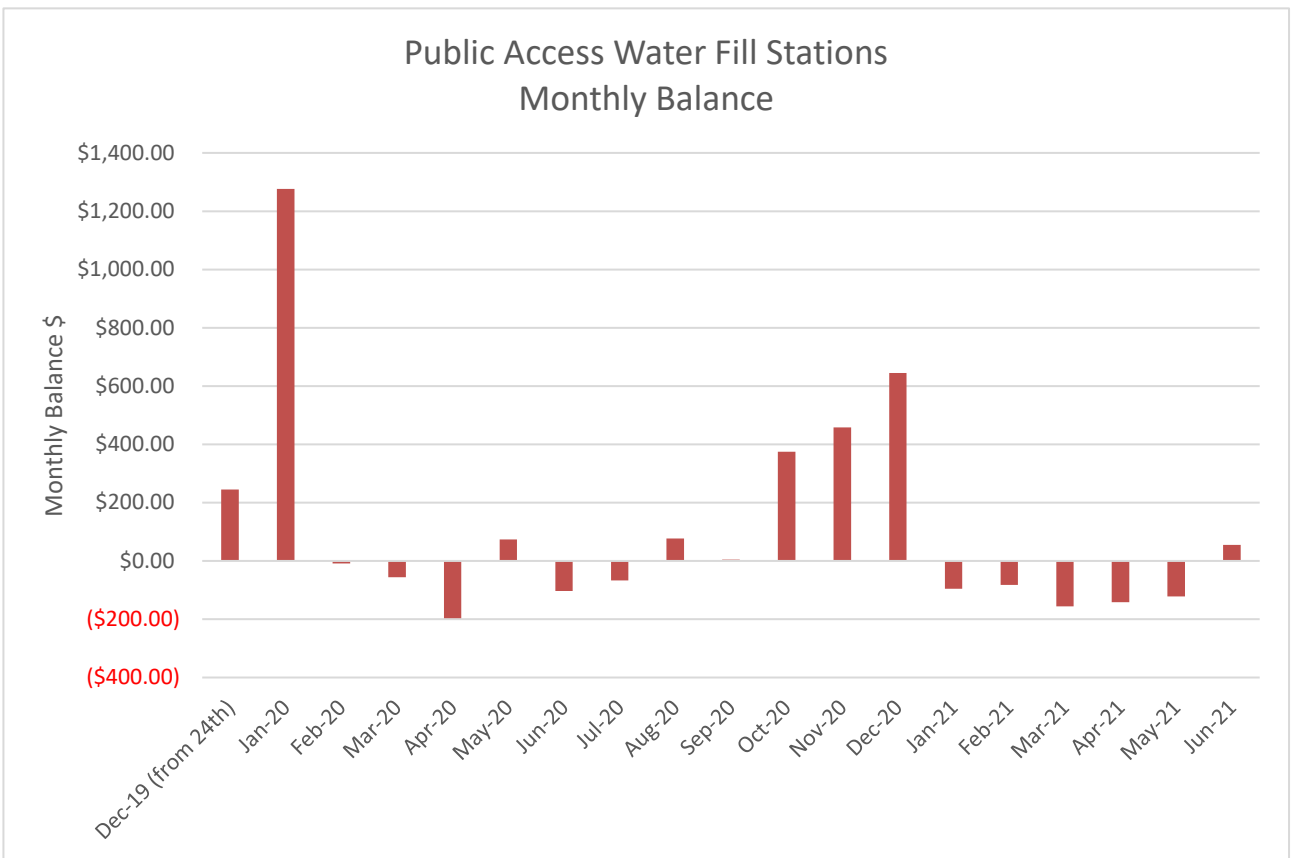
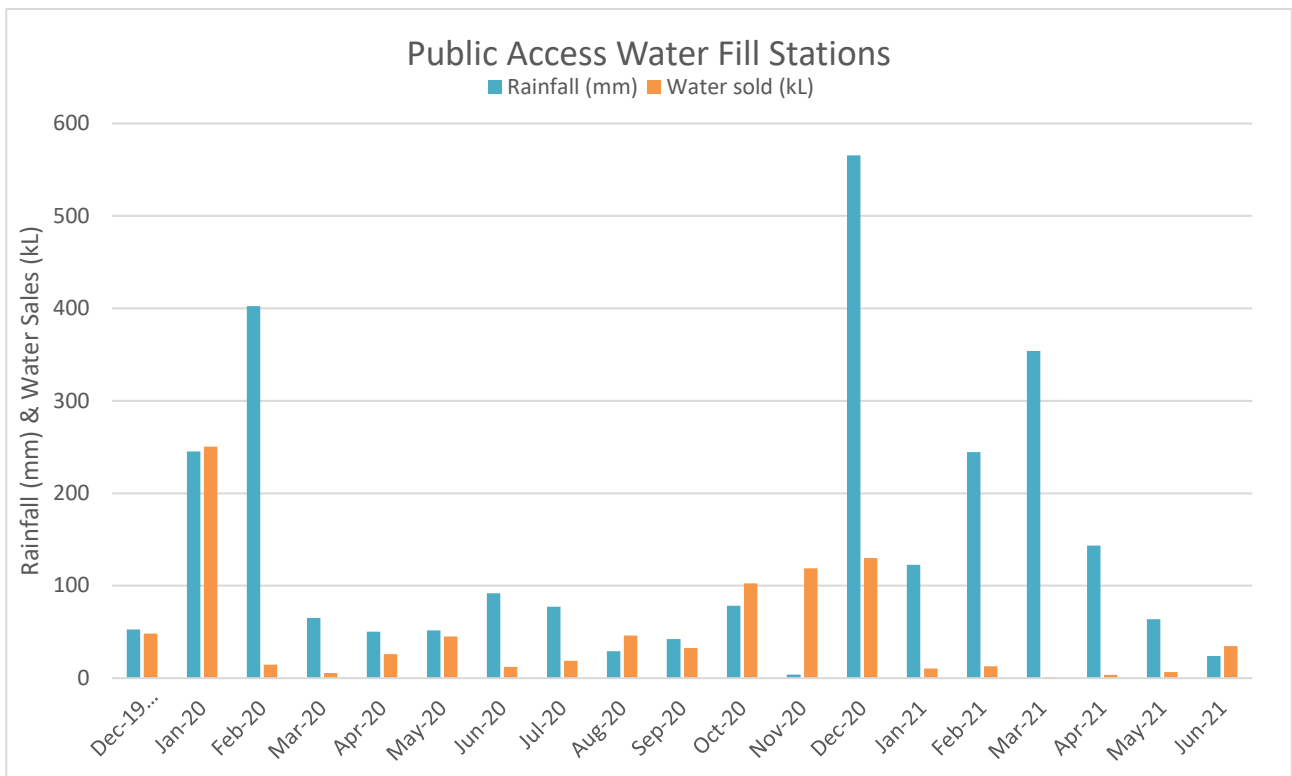
### • Public access water fill stations

The public access water fill stations were installed in December 2019 (South Lismore) and January 2020 (Bangalow) and have been available for use by the public since that time. Increased water sales through the stations coincide with low rainfall periods however there is minor usage observed each month which Rous staff understand to be rural customers obtaining drinking water.

The water is charged at the same rate as the bulk water fill stations currently \$6.02/kL (2021/22). These stations have operated reliably, with only one outage on the Bangalow station for a period of two weeks when a modem failed and required the manufacturer to replace. No feedback has been received from the public on their operation.

The table below provides a summary of the usage, sales and fees through the public access water fill stations since installation. The data is presented in charts on the following page.

Month	Water sold (kL)	Amount Received from Customer	Transaction Fees	Maintenance Fees	Monthly Balance	Rainfall (mm)
Dec-19 (from 24th)	48.1	\$276.81	-\$31.86	\$0.00	\$244.95	53
Jan-20	250.6	\$1,440.83	-\$164.78	\$0.00	\$1,276.05	245
Feb-20	14.6	\$84.00	-\$9.74	-\$82.84	-\$8.58	403
Mar-20	5.7	\$32.59	-\$4.65	-\$83.82	-\$55.88	65
Apr-20	25.9	\$148.97	-\$15.10	-\$330.66	-\$196.79	50
May-20	45.0	\$258.61	-\$19.82	-\$165.00	\$73.79	52
Jun-20	12.8	\$70.00	-\$7.78	-\$165.00	-\$102.78	92
Jul-20	18.6	\$107.00	-\$8.93	-\$165.00	-\$66.93	77
Aug-20	46.2	\$265.75	-\$23.28	-\$165.00	\$77.47	29
Sep-20	32.6	\$187.45	-\$17.59	-\$165.00	\$4.86	42
Oct-20	102.6	\$589.64	-\$50.24	-\$165.00	\$374.40	78
Nov-20	118.8	\$682.92	-\$59.43	-\$165.00	\$458.49	4
Dec-20	130.0	\$747.59	\$62.22	-\$165.00	\$644.81	566
Jan-21	10.6	\$61.00	\$8.90	-\$165.00	-\$95.10	123
Feb-21	12.8	\$73.42	\$9.50	-\$165.00	-\$82.08	244
Mar-21	1.2	\$7.00	\$2.45	-\$165.00	-\$155.55	354
Apr-21	3.5	\$20.06	\$3.07	-\$165.00	-\$141.87	143
May-21	6.6	\$38.00	\$5.10	-\$165.00	-\$121.90	64
Jun-21	34.8	\$200.00	\$20.50	-\$165.00	\$55.50	24
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>920.29</b>	<b>\$5,291.64</b>	<b>-\$301.46</b>	<b>-\$2,807.32</b>	<b>\$2,182.86</b>	



In the December 2019 Council report, it was flagged that the stations may be converted for bulk water use or temporarily decommissioned and stored for drought periods. Given the low ongoing costs and continual, albeit at times low usage and the estimated cost of approximately \$2000 in labour and materials to decommission, store and reinstate the stations, it is recommended the public access water fill stations remain as a permanent water supply option for the community.

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- **Additional bulk water fill stations**

The significant rainfall received in January and February 2020 alleviated pressure on the existing water fill station network and the urgency of the installation of additional water fill stations. Nonetheless Council staff have been progressing the required investigations, design and approvals to install two additional bulk water fill stations on the network.

Across the Lismore and Byron areas, where the highest demand was observed during the 2019 drought, 13 potential sites were investigated. The sites were assessed on the basis of avoiding pressure and flow impacts within the Rous County Council (RCC) water network and for nearby retail customers, suitable access for trucks and proximity to residences.

The preferred sites for further investigation were identified as Lagoon Grass Road, Lagoon Grass (north of Lismore) and Foxs Lane, Tyagarah. Investigation and design costs for the two sites have been higher than anticipated and the remaining available budget will not be sufficient to construct the water fill stations at these sites.

- **Lagoon Grass Road, Lagoon Grass**

Preliminary design plans and a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) have been developed for this site. A conditional Section 138 (s138) approval under the NSW Roads Act 1993 has been obtained from Lismore City Council. The site will require significant pavement works and bitumen sealing to meet the s138 approval and make it suitable for truck movements. Quotes for this work are currently being obtained, and when expected costs are known, a decision will be made on whether to proceed with construction at this site.

An alternative site is the Lions Park on Bangalow Road which has established areas for vehicle entry and exit onto Bangalow Road. The potential of this site to accommodate a bulk water fill station is subject to more detailed investigations regarding available water flow and pressure and site owner and road authority approvals.

- **Foxs Lane, Tyagarah**

Council staff have undertaken significant consultation with nearby residents at this site and through their feedback, we have undertaken additional investigations and made design changes to minimise impacts. A Traffic Safety Assessment and Review of Environmental Factors has been undertaken and conclude that the site is suitable for the bulk water fill station. All equipment and fittings have been procured and installation quotes are being obtained from suitable contractors. This station is proposed to be installed before the end of 2021.

## **Governance**

- **Finance**

The remaining funding from 2020/21 for this project has been requested to be carried forward to continue this project in 2021/22. Additional funding will be required to complete the project and once the required amount is determined through quotes, funding will be sought through the Quarterly Budget Review Statement process.

## **Environment**

The REF documents prepared by Rous County Council staff for the additional bulk water fill stations identified the primary environmental impacts to be traffic, noise and general construction related impacts. The stations are to be located within road reserve nearby to high volume roadways largely negating impacts on traffic generation and noise. The REFs conclude that the benefits derived from the installation of the bulk water fill stations for the community are greater than the minor and largely mitigated environmental impacts.

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## Consultation

Rous County Council staff have consulted with stakeholders as follows regarding the additional bulk water fill stations.

Stakeholder	Consultation summary
Lismore City Council (LCC)	LCC development staff have been consulted in relation to the proposal to install Lagoons Grass bulk water fill station. LCC staff have provided their in-principal support for the development and require a s138 application to be lodged for works in a public roadway.
Byron Shire Council (BSC)	BSC development staff have been consulted in relation to the proposal to install Foxs Lane bulk water fill station. BSC is supportive of the proposal. No further approvals are required.
Foxs Lane Local Residents	Residents in Foxs Lane were initially contacted about the proposed fill station by letter dated 17 November 2020, followed by an onsite meeting with Rous County Council staff on 19 November 2020. One resident raised concerns regarding potential for increased traffic movements and noise. The site is within 60m of the north bound lane of the Pacific Highway and approximately 190m from the closest residence and as such it was determined that the increase in local noise would be negligible, and a noise assessment was not required. A Traffic Safety Assessment was undertaken which concluded the site is suitable for the bulk water fill station.

## Conclusion

The public access water fill stations have been operational for approximately 18 months and based on the usage data, they have been well received and utilised by the community during dry weather periods. Council staff have considered options for the stations during low usage periods including temporary decommissioning, however the preferred option is to leave the two fill stations in place as a permanent water supply option for the community.

Investigations and project activities continue for the additional bulk water fill stations. Additional funding will be required to complete this project. The final amount is being determined and will be sought through the Quarterly Budget Review Statement process.

### Attachment

1. Map showing location of proposed water fill stations