
Update on interim arrangements for Lismore Levee Scheme

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

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Note the progress on interim arrangements for the Lismore Levee Scheme.
2. Receive a further update on progress towards resolving the arrangements for the Lismore Levee Scheme before November 2023.

Background

At a workshop in September 2022, Council received an update and introduction to matters relating to the Lismore Levee Scheme and other flood mitigation matters.

At the 14 December 2022 Council meeting, Council received a report regarding a number of activities related to strategic options and management of risk in the flood mitigation area.

It was resolved by Council (84/22) to authorise the General Manager to negotiate an interim solution to effectively manage risk associated with Rous's function and operation in urban flood mitigation with respect to the Lismore Levee Scheme.

The work was to involve engaging with Lismore City Council to confirm a position on the treatment of matters such as asset renewal and strategic planning. This is necessary to minimise existing and future risk and will require, among other things, consideration of:

- (i) Charging methodology and basis
- (ii) Adherence to Australian accounting standards
- (iii) Asset renewal and strategic planning
- (iv) The existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the former Richmond River County Council and Lismore City Council
- (v) Service Level Agreement
- (vi) Formal conferral and acceptance of delegation
- (vii) Disaster funding arrangements.

The target was to have an agreed position determined no later than 31 March 2023 to inform budget processes and for a report to be provided to Council's April 2023 meeting.

Update

Since the resolution, staff from Rous and Lismore City Council (LCC) have met and letters have been sent to the General Manager of Lismore City Council from the General Manager of Rous County Council. A workshop is being planned to be attended by relevant staff and General Managers from across both organisations to discuss and resolve positions with regard to the Lismore Levee Scheme. The workshop is proposed to be held before 30 June 2023.

The need for a position to be determined on the Lismore Levee Scheme has been reinforced by the announcement in February 2023 of almost \$30M in funding to LCC under the Federal Government's *Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative*.

The projects nominated by LCC and identified for funding include:

- (i) Combined upgrades to increase capacity and resilience of the Lismore Levee Scheme pumps and pump stations (7 projects¹) - \$22,563,809
- (ii) Electrify/install communications and control instruments (SCADA) to replace the tractor pump to remove stormwater from the CBD - \$2,620,651
- (iii) Fibre connect all flood pump stations - \$1,310,326
- (iv) Mechanical trash racks at all 3 major pump station inlets to reduce the risk of rubbish and debris causing damage to pumps - \$3,275,814

This is a significant investment in the Lismore Levee Scheme, almost matching the replacement cost of \$33M (June 2022) for the existing scheme assets.

With this level of funding and investment in the scheme proposed, the Levee scheme's ownership, ongoing funding and risk management arrangements need to be resolved before these upgrade projects commence.

Finance

Not applicable

Legal

Refer to [14 December 2022 council meeting agenda](#) item 11.1 - 'Strategic option and management of risk: flood mitigation' report.

Conclusion

This activity remains a priority for the organisation to resolve and provide clarity to both Lismore City Council and Rous. With the recent announcement of funding to LCC under the Federal Government's *Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative*, the need for progress on the issue has been highlighted.

¹ These 7 projects include levee scheme and sewer pump stations.