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# Update on interim arrangements for Lismore Levee Scheme

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

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## Recommendation

That Council in addition to previous resolutions on the matter:

1. Receive and note this update.
2. Authorise the General Manager to approve access to the Lismore Levee Scheme assets by Lismore City Council (LCC) for the purposes of progressing new asset construction and renewal and upgrade work under the *Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program (NRRRP)*, subject to LCC's written confirmation that they will assume ownership of the new, upgraded and renewed assets.
3. Receive a further update before end of July 2024.

## Background

Recently, Council has received reports on the Lismore Levee scheme at its meetings of:

- December 2022
- April 2023
- August 2023

These reports have presented updates on actions proposed or taken to progress discussions with the General Manager of Lismore City Council (LCC) regarding solutions to effectively manage risk and progress a position with LCC on the future ownership of the Lismore Levee Scheme.

Progress has been inconsistent, however, with the appointment of a new General Manager for LCC in the first quarter of 2023, movement towards an outcome for both organisations has been better.

A clear date for an agreed position on the Lismore Levee Scheme for both organisations has not been agreed.

The need for a formal position to be adopted remains a high priority as work progresses by LCC on the \$30M *Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program (NRRRP)* for the Lismore Levee Scheme.

## Comment

Since the last update to Council in August 2023, progress has been limited but productive. Following a meeting of the General Managers in July 2023, where agreement was reached on the need to jointly develop an Asset Management Plan, this work has progressed.

LCC engaged Morrison Low consultants in September 2023 to undertake a review of existing asset information for the levee scheme and provide an Asset Management Plan (AMP) for its ongoing management. The cost of this work is being equally funded by LCC and Rous. Following a request for information in late November, Rous staff have provided the requested asset information to LCC.

New asset construction, and asset renewal and upgrade work on the levee scheme by LCC, funded under the *Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program (NRRRP)*, continues in the planning and design phase while the levee ownership discussion continues. Rous staff continue to provide asset and design details for the scheme to enable the planning and design work to continue.

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Given the significant investment of \$30M planned for the scheme, the ongoing AMP development and the continuation of discussions with LCC surrounding the scheme's ownership, it is considered appropriate that LCC commit to assuming ownership of the new and upgraded assets of the levee.

Following the February \ March 2022 floods, in September 2022 Public Works were funded for the *Flood Levee Repair and Maintenance Program* to review the condition of urban flood levees across the state. Utilising geotechnical and structural engineers, the program inspected the Lismore Levee Scheme. The report on the Lismore Levee and any defects, is expected before the end of the calendar year. Based on a prioritisation process for defects across the eight affected Councils in the Northern Rivers, funding is expected be available for some of the identified defects in the Lismore Levee Scheme.

**Finance**

Not applicable

**Legal**

Not applicable

**Conclusion**

With work progressing to resolve the ownership arrangement for the Lismore Levee Scheme, Rous continues to support LCC in the preparation of an Asset Management Plan for the Lismore Levee Scheme and for the planning and design work for new and upgraded assets of the levee under the NRRRP. It is recommended that LCC be approved to access the scheme assets to progress this work while the ownership arrangements continue, subject to LCC's written confirmation that they will assume ownership of the new, upgraded and renewed assets.