



# Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee

**Hearing Date:** 21 November 2023

**Question[s] taken on notice**

**Directed to:** Bureau of Meteorology

**Received Date:** 14 December 2023

## 1. **The CHAIR, page 43**

### **Question Asked to Peter STONE:**

The CHAIR: I might get started following on from some evidence that we have just had. One of the critiques that we have had across the course of the inquiry is the timeliness of rainfall data from clearly your gauges to the incident control centres. We had evidence given just now that it can take upwards of an hour or an hour and 10 minutes for the rainfall data to be updated in the incident control centre. I was wondering if you had any comments about the length of time it generally takes, in what can be relatively dynamic, changing environments, for latest information about current rainfall to be provided to incident control centres.

Chantal DONNELLY: The bureau provides its rainfall data. I have to take on notice how long it takes for it to leave our systems, but it is generally the responsibility of the agencies who are ingesting our data. They are signed up as registered users, and they have direct access to our data. It is I suppose how long that data takes to get from our data outputs into their systems. That time thing is certainly not on our side, I do not think.

Peter STONE: Just to elaborate on that, in Victoria the flood warning infrastructure network comprises 764 assets. Of those the bureau owns 169. The rest of the assets comprise rain gauges and river gauges, and they are typically owned by state government entities. Some are owned by water authorities; some are owned by local government. That information all comes together and arrives at the bureau, and we publish it. That is the process there.

The CHAIR: Okay. It would be useful, because I think it is going to be a point of contention in the evidence, for us to know where to find the answer to the question of how long it takes for the information, once it hits your gauges, to get out of your system, and if it is someone else taking the time to consider these things.

Peter STONE: So would it be helpful – I mean, there is a lot.

The CHAIR: You can take that on notice if you would like.

Peter STONE: No, absolutely. I am just wondering what it is that we would provide – it is just that, you know, there are 764 bits of kit. I am just wondering –

If there is an average amount of time, if there is a benchmark amount of time – I do not know what your system tells you, but essentially we are interested in, from the time when rain falls and hits a gauge, how long it then usually takes for that piece of information to be reported out.

Peter STONE: No worries. What I will try and do is provide you with a range. Some will be more or less instantaneous, and some will be slower. So we will provide information and averages on that.

**Response:**

For Bureau owned automatic rain gauges it takes up to one hour for information to be published on the Bureau's website.

The Bureau does not own any river gauges in the Melbourne Metropolitan catchments. There are 2 Bureau owned river gauges in Victoria. For these 2 gauges, it takes up to one hour for information to be published on the Bureau's website.

For assets owned by third parties, provision of data is dependent on the asset owner. Data from automatic gauges is published on the Bureau's website within one hour. Data from manual gauges is published on the Bureau's website every 24 hours.

**2. Gaelle BROAD, page 45-6**

**Question Asked to Chantal DONNELLY:**

And we have heard evidence before the committee. Certainly it impacted Maribyrnong.

Chantal DONNELLY: The bureau does not have a role in issuing flood levels and flood warnings for Melbourne Water catchments.

Gaelle BROAD: Just the actual river levels, though.

Chantal DONNELLY: As far as I know the only things we have are the observations that are published, but I can take that on notice.

The CHAIR: It might be useful to take that on notice. If you could tell us what you do for the Melbourne Water areas, that would be very useful.

**Response:**

The Bureau does not measure river level height within the Melbourne Metropolitan catchments. The Bureau publishes warnings received from Melbourne Water on its website within 30 minutes of receipt.

**3. David ETTERS HANK, page 58-9**

**Question Asked to Chantal DONNELLY/Peter STONE:**

We have got one of those alternate reality, parallel truth-type things happening. I am going to ask you to come back to us, so take this on notice. Justice Pagone did an inquiry for Melbourne Water on the floods, and at paragraph 73 he starts a history of this. What he basically concludes from this chronology is that on the morning of the 13th you had issued a major flood warning for the Maribyrnong. At 3:24 in the afternoon you downgraded that...

” But clearly there is this disconnect, and we are interested to make sure this does not happen again, okay? I will just finish this, and then by all means – I am conscious of time as well. And then at 2:25 am, again, based on updated data, it went back to a major flood. But of course by 2:25 am most people are well and truly tucked into bed. And then the next thing they know of course is it is at the door. So we would be very interested to have the bureau’s response to this analysis provided to us in writing.

The second one is that the report also makes a very specific criticism of the bureau when it talks about, in paragraph 124, the need for more timely forecast data from the bureau, okay? We would really like your response to that chronology at 73 to 74. We would really like your response to paragraph 124 – the need for more timely updates.

Chantal DONNELLY: What was the first paragraph?

David ETTERS HANK: You will get all this in writing. Then we would also like any other response that you would care to make to the Pagone report in writing by 4 December, if you could, before we have our next lot of witnesses come in, if that is all right. I do not know if there is anything in particular you wanted to –

Peter STONE: Yes, just a couple of things. Look, we are unlikely to provide detailed commentary on paragraphs 73 and 74, was it?

David ETTERS HANK: Seventy-two and 73, yes.

Peter STONE: Seventy-two and 73. I mean, they are just statements of fact, and they are actually questions for Melbourne Water. We publish – so we do not issue, we publish; there is a difference – the information that they decide to provide as a warning, so we really do not have anything to comment on on those paragraphs.

**Response:**

The question asked does not relate to the parts of the document cited. The Bureau is unable to respond to this question.

**4. David ETTERS HANK, page 59**

**Question Asked to Chantal DONNELLY:**

Could we also get a copy of the transition document you talked about in terms of the changing roles and responsibilities between the bureau and Melbourne Water?

**Response:**

The Bureau and Melbourne Water are in the early stages of discussions to determine the scope and funding arrangements for the transition of responsibility of Melbourne Water's flood forecasting and warning services to the Bureau.

**5. David ETTERS HANK, page 60**

**Question Asked to Chantal DONNELLY:**

There is a project to completely rework the mid and lower Maribyrnong that it is being conducted by Melbourne Water. I am just really interested know whether you are involved. Perhaps you could just take that on notice as well.

**Response:**

The Bureau is not directly involved in this project.