



Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee

Hearing Date: 25 October 2023

Question[s] taken on notice

Directed to: Goulburn-Murray Water

Received Date: 27 November 2023

1. **Melina BATH, page 82**

Question Asked to Charmaine QUICK:

We were at a hearing in Seymour, and I am sure you have read the transcripts. We heard from Derrick Meggitt, who is the director of Goulburn River Trout farm. At that hearing he explained the very significant flood mitigation measures that they implemented knowing the idea of what was coming, not necessarily the magnitude. He also said that there were some 38,000 megalitres, the deluge came overnight and no-one was warned – and they were his words. I am just wanting to understand what level of responsibility you hold for that, knowing that that really ripped asunder that particular organisation and that business?

Charmaine QUICK: I will refer to my previous answers. On 12 October we actually rang a number. I am not sure whether he is one of those in that –

Melina BATH: Would you have that knowledge? Would you be able to share that with us if he was contacted? You can take that on notice.

Response:

Derrick Meggitt is included in the list of 30 people immediately downstream of Lake Eildon that GMW called to inform that releases from Lake Eildon may be increasing. He was contacted at 1:37pm on 12 October 2022.

2. **Melina BATH, page 82**

Question Asked to Charmaine QUICK:

You have met with Ed – great. That was going to be my next question. You have said, I think, that you met with a number of different farmers and landholders and agencies.

Can you provide a list of those people to our committee so that we are aware?

Response:

Attachment 1 includes a list of meetings we had with landholders about flood preparedness, response, and recovery.

3. **Melina BATH, page 83**

Question Asked to Charmaine QUICK:

You said that you had a 6-hour review and that you went through the whole scenario. Can you please provide your notes, share your notes, from that 6-hour review? You said that you unpacked the whole event and you had various elements there.

[...] You can take it on notice. That would be lovely, because we need to understand what bodies know, institutions know, and then how we can make recommendations to assist communities to survive better in the case of this.

Response:

Please refer to Attachment 2.

4. **Melina BATH, page 83-4**

Question Asked to Charmaine QUICK:

So probably take it on notice. But also I think the important thing would be that that report might be out after our report is due, so any sort of information that you can provide along the way is helpful. So that is that one.

If I go to Loch Garry, you mentioned that there is a modernisation of Loch Garry. Gaelle and I have been out there and seen the rusty old bolts that are very, very, very old.

Modernisation: do you have a cost estimate of that? And do you have a time frame estimate for that modernisation?

Melina BATH: [...] And have you established those sets of rules yet?

Response:

In August 2023, the GMW Board approved the Revised Loch Garry Operating Rules, which had been recommended by the Loch Garry Reference Committee. These operating rules are now in effect and will determine how GMW operates the Loch Garry regulator going forth. The Revised Loch Garry Revised Operating Rules can be viewed in Attachment 3.

Goulburn-Murray Water is undertaking a broad ranging review about the future state of the Loch Garry Flood Protection District. As part of that review, GMW has also developed a Loch Garry Flood Protection District Future Service Strategy Review to explore options for the future service state of the Loch Garry flood regulator, including financial impacts and options around the future of Loch Garry. A community reference group comprising Loch Garry Flood Protection Customers, community representatives, and key stakeholders, is being established to provide advice to the strategy. The community group will meet for the

first time in December 2023 and subsequent meetings will take place throughout 2024. The Terms of Reference for the community reference group can be viewed in Attachment 4.

The timeframe and indicative meeting schedule at page 2 of the Terms of Reference records that a 'proposed final strategy and next steps' will be the focus the final meeting in November 2024. At present it is not possible to provide a cost estimate in respect of any proposed modernisation as a future strategy for Loch Garry is yet to be determined.

5. **Rikkie-Lee TYRREL, page 84**

Question Asked to Peter CLYDESDALE:

What I am trying to find out is: if people were trying to make the calls to the emergency line, how many people were available to answer the phone and answer their calls? That is what I am trying to work out at the moment.

[...] I am assuming that you would not be able to tell me how many calls were received and documented during the flood event.

Response:

Below are the number of calls GMW received through its Waterline number, Contact Centre number and its Emergency line.

Waterline is the number customers call to talk to water planners about water orders. It can be contacted 24/7.

The Contact Centre number is GMW's standard number that people call for general inquiries. It can be contacted during regular business hours.

The Emergency Line is the number people call for any emergencies relating to GMW. It can be contacted 24/7.

Waterline Calls

- *282 calls in the period of 13/10/22 – 17/10/22*
- *552 calls from the 13/10/22 – 27/10/22 (Fortnight)*
- *775 calls from the 13/10/22 – 10/11/22 (Month)*
- *31 calls via Waterline were specifically tagged as a flood issue*

Emergency Line

- *76 calls from the 13/10/22 – 17/10/22*
- *132 calls from the 13/10/22 – 27/10/22 (Fortnight)*
- *152 calls from the 13/10/22 – 10/11/22 (Month)*
- *162 calls from the 10/10/22 – 30/11/22 (This is from the first and last flood related call)*

Contact Centre

- 368 Calls from the 13/10/22 – 17/10/22
- 63 flood related calls from the 13/10/22 – 17/10/22

GMW actual emergency line had one 24/7 staff member on 13 October 2022. This was scaled up to three on 14 October, then back to two on 15 October, as call demand did not require three.

For reference, GMW usually has three water planners covering the night shift for Waterline and seven water planners covering the day shift.

Six people were available on the Contact Centre during business hours. After hours calls are directed to the Emergency Line. If all staff in the Contact Centre are already on calls, then the calls are forwarded to one of the people in our Customer Support Team. This ensures the hold times are kept to a minimum and all calls are answered. Very few people who called would have been on hold for more than a minute, and even in extreme cases, it is unlikely anyone would have been on hold for more than three minutes.

6. **Rikkie-Lee TYRREL, page 85**

Question Asked to Charmaine QUICK:

When there is a community that are trying to voice their concerns about the way that the water is being managed and whatnot. If they have got a big concern, say, dam storages, how often are consultations undertaken prior to this event?

[...] Charmaine QUICK: And I will be providing on notice all of the events we have done subsequent to the October floods: on how many committee meetings, town halls, all those sorts of things, that we have attended.

Response:

Consultation for flood planning and mitigation sits with Councils and CMAs. GMW had no requests for such consultation prior to the floods, except for some invites from the SES to flood preparation meetings.

Attachment 1 includes a list of meetings we had with landholders before, during, and after the floods.

7. **Melina BATH, page 94**

Question Asked to Peter CLYDESDALE:

I am going to go back to a question I asked the other catchments. In relation to the GMW channel modernisation program, if you could speak to that, I am interested to know about what modelling you have done in relation to impact on floods moving forward and an update on that channel program.

[...] Melina BATH: And in relation to – some of these channels are very old, I am imagining.

Peter CLYDESDALE: Yes.

Melina BATH: And without going back in time too far, who is responsible for their upkeep if they are not – if they are red, if they are ‘do not remove’?

Peter CLYDESDALE: So on the private property, the landowner would have been responsible for the upkeep of those.

Melina BATH: You might need to take it on notice, but have you got any sort of question around how many kilometres and the status of those?

Response:

Following the Connections Project, Goulburn-Murray Water and Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority worked together to determine where decommissioned channels should have their banks retained and where they could be removed.

Channel banks were classified using a ‘traffic light’ system. Green represented banks that should be removed, amber represented banks where the decision to keep or remove the bank would be left to the landowners’ discretion, and red represented banks that must be retained.

The amount of channel banks that fell into each category are as follows:

Green (should be removed): 1212.41km

Amber (landowners’ discretion): 588.94km

Red (must be retained): 548.8km

Attachment 5 shows the locations of the decommissioned channels and their classification under the traffic light system.

Our review of the transcript has shown that Goulburn-Murray Water committed to providing the following information:

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Charmaine QUICK: I cannot comment all the way back to the 1930s and why the reviews have been done. But I suppose you heard this morning: we pulled a committee together to review these operating rules. We committed to that community two reviews – well, three things: fix the levees. We had resounding support from our customer base, and this is a beneficiary-pays. I want to make it clear that Loch Garry is a beneficiary-pays flood mitigation scheme, so that is why Goulburn–Murray Water is involved. We have 116 customers who pay us about –

Peter CLYDESDALE: About \$238 – something like that; I would have to check.

Charmaine QUICK: \$230, \$280.

Response:

The average annual charge for Loch Garry Flood Protection customers in 2022/23 was \$270.

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Charmaine QUICK: I will also clarify, we actually had from the usage point of view – so people actually did irrigate after the event. I can give you the exact numbers, but it was about 800 gigalitres of water that was provided last season even though there was a flood. Water was still actually in demand over that period of time as well...

Rikkie-Lee TYRRELL: So was that 800 gigalitres specifically just for irrigation or was that conveyancing water, environmental water – everything? Was that the total take?

Charmaine QUICK: No, no. That was just what we supplied to the irrigation areas. I would have to get the exact number. Because people did actually irrigate and Peter can probably talk about the fact that – our irrigation network goes all the way to Boort. They were certainly in flood. But there were areas that actually did not get as much water and actually were wanting to irrigate within a couple of weeks and we were frantically trying to get our system up and running after the flood to be able to meet those demands of irrigators.

Response:

Despite the significant rainfall on 12 and 13 October 2022, several GMW customers placed irrigation orders as early as 19 October 2022.

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Gaëlle BROAD: Forgive my ignorance, but does environmental water get used? Does it get taken out regularly? How does that work? It seems like quite a large percentage that is sitting in there.

Andrew SHIELDS: It is used at different times to irrigation water. Normally irrigation water might come out in spring if it has been dry and then over summer, and autumn is probably the other big time when irrigation water is used. Environmental water sometimes can be used in winter and then again in spring. They might do a couple of events in spring and then maybe drop out to lower flows through the summer months and again perhaps in autumn. So it just has a different timing of use, but certainly environmental water holders and managers deploy their water.

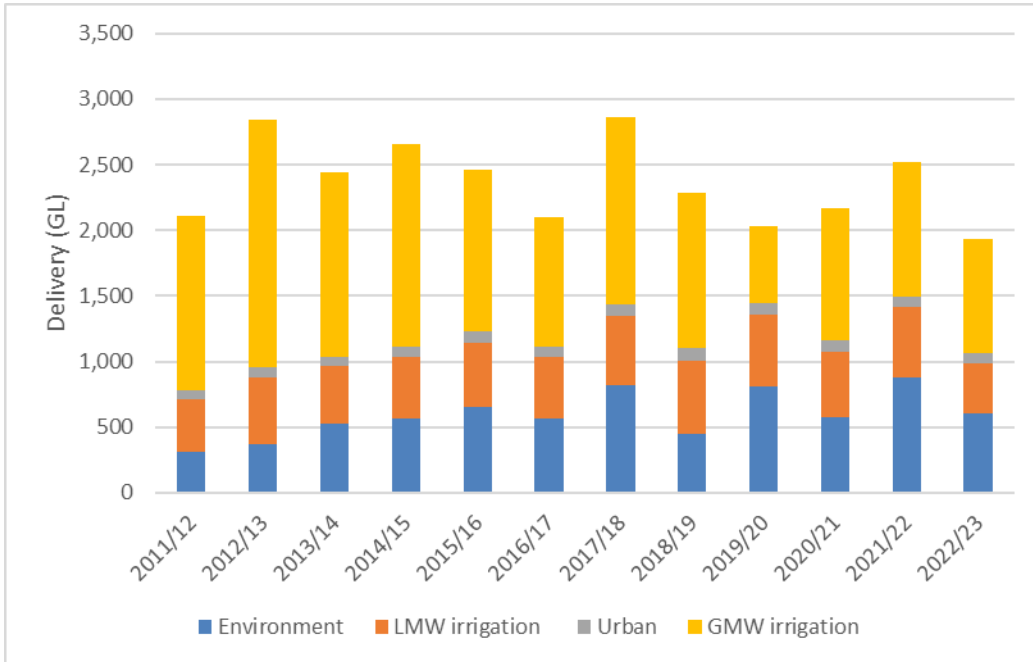
Charmaine QUICK: And we are happy to supply some records over the last few years of how much delivery the environmental water holder has used and irrigators.

Response:

Below is a graph and table showing the usage by northern Victorian water entitlement holders from 2011/12 to 2022/23.

The chart shows that water entitlement holders continue to utilise water quite consistently noting the variation in both the wet and dry years.

The table also shows that environmental water holders also consistently use their delivery shares.





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(GL)	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Environment	315	367	530	568	649	563	822	445	809	579	882	604
LMW irrigation	399	512	435	469	490	471	529	563	546	498	532	380
Urban	65	77	73	77	90	75	79	99	89	82	81	77
GMW irrigation	1331	1885	1406	1543	1229	990	1435	1180	583	1011	1022	870
Total	2,111	2,842	2,444	2,657	2,458	2,098	2,865	2,286	2,027	2,169	2,516	1,931

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