



# Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee

**Hearing Date:** 10 May 2024

**Question[s] taken on notice**

**Directed to:** Melbourne Water Review Panel

**Received Date:** 28 May 2024

## 1. **Samantha RATNAM, page 30**

### **Question Asked to Mark BABISTER:**

Thank you, Mr Babister. They are very sobering numbers, which is why I wanted to capture them accurately. We have another inquiry, which this committee is going to undertake next, which is looking at climate resilience and looking exactly into those questions about all those authorities and our infrastructure deal with this ever-rising threat and how best we mitigate it as well. But thank you for clarifying that. We have had asserted to us by professionals who used to work in the field around some of the modelling or some of the data that Jacobs and therefore Melbourne Water have used in this latest round of modelling, and just because they were talking to the confidence you had in the modelling work analysis that Jacobs had done for this, I wanted to ask if those assertions about some inaccuracies had been put to you. Perhaps you want to take on notice that we have had put to us that the flood level for 1993 should be lower than what you have at the moment – that Jacobs should have used a 3.31 figure rather than a 3.83 metres figure, and then Jacobs used that in the modelling summary report that has been tabled here as well. Has it ever been asserted to you? Have you heard of those contested figures?

**Mark BABISTER:** I have not heard of that, but I could take it on notice.

### **Response:**

The question taken on notice pertains to a report by Jacobs, “2024 Maribyrnong River Flood Modelling Project Summary Report” (dated 24 April 2024). This report was completed one week after the panel finalised the “Flemington Racecourse Floodwall, Second Addendum.” As such the Panel did not consider this report during the preparations of this Second Addendum.

The flood level in the Jacobs report appears to be sourced from the SES VIC website, (<https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/plan-and-stay-safe/flood-guides/maribyrnong-city-council>). The SES VIC site currently links to a

report titled “Maribyrnong Local Flood Guide”. The flood level at Maribyrnong for the 1993 event is listed as 3.83 in this report.

However sometime between 11 March 2022 and 30 September 2022 the linked report on this page changes to “Maribyrnong Local Flood Guide” from a report titled “Maribyrnong, Yarraville & Footscray Local Flood Guide” (Source: The Internet Archive, [wed.archive.org](http://wed.archive.org)). Prior to this change the 1993 flood level at Maribyrnong is given as 3.31m.

Verification of the level is out of the scope of The Panel. However, it is suggested that what the correct level is and why its reporting has changed should be undertaken by the relevant authorities. Verifying historic flood levels can be a very difficult as reported in the inquiry.

### **Additional questions from Samantha RATNAM to Melbourne Water Review**

#### **Questions Asked:**

- a) Is the flood level Melbourne Water marked on the Maribyrnong Township historic flood marker for Sep-1993 0.5 m higher than the level marked on the flood marker pole prior to it being repainted in mid-2023?

#### **Response:**

The Panel is unsure of what was previously marked on the Maribyrnong Township historic flood marker.

- b) Should the flood level for Sep-1993 should be 3.31 m to the current datum (m AHD) not 3.83 m?

#### **Response:**

There is clearly a discrepancy in the reporting of the 1993 flood level at Maribyrnong as discussed above. The correct flood level should be investigated by relevant agencies.

- c) Was it incorrect for the Jacobs report to quote this incorrect level of 3.83 m in their 2024 Maribyrnong River Flood Modelling Project Summary Report at Table 2-2 on page 6 of their report?

#### **Response:**

The Panel is unable to say if the 3.83 level is correct or incorrect. Jacobs appear to have sourced the flood level from the SES VIC website. As discussed above this discrepancy should be investigated by the relevant agencies.

- d) Has Jacobs used flood height of ~3.6 m for the Oct-1983 flood, when MW's historic flood marker shows the correct flood height of 2.85 m AHD?

**Response:**

For the 1983 flood level Jacobs accessed the 19 October 1983 issue of the Essendon Gazette. Generally, going back to the original historical documents is a good source of flood levels but sometimes they contain inaccuracies. It is beyond the scope of the Panel to assess the accuracy of this flood level or the validity of the data source Jacobs has chosen. This should be investigated by the relevant agencies.