



The Hon Dr Anthony Lynham MP
Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy

Your ref A527592
Our refs MO/20/6832, CTS 01013/20

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 5 February 2020, concerning e-petition No. 3225-19 and paper petition 3277-20, received by the House on 4 February 2020.

The petitions include a request to release the technical reports relating to the structural integrity of Paradise Dam.

On 29 November 2019, by media statement I advised about the public release of technical reports and about an independent inquiry into Paradise Dam.

The technical reports, available on Sunwater's website, highlighted:

- issues with the bonds between the layers of roller compacted concrete in the dam wall,
- other issues identified prior to September 2019, including downstream scour and foundation risks,
- potential risks to the dam wall in rare, extreme weather events like those experienced in 2013, and
- the need to minimise pressure on the dam wall by lowering the water level.

In addition Dr Paul Rizzo has been engaged by Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers to assess safety and rehabilitation options for Paradise Dam and a further nine documents have been requested through a right to information application. Sunwater is currently assessing the public release of these documents through the right to information process. However, I note that Sunwater has offered Dr Rizzo access to the requested documents to assist with his report, and that all relevant documents are being provided to the independent commission of inquiry into Paradise Dam.

Due to the potential risk to public safety, decisions were taken to lower the storage level to 42 per cent and to lower the spillway at the end of the 2019-20 wet season. Lowering the spillway is an interim measure to protect the city of Bundaberg and surrounds from the risk of catastrophic flooding.

Paradise Dam is safe under normal circumstances, however, there remains an unacceptable risk of the dam failing during an extreme flood, similar to what occurred in 2013 following ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald.

The petition also includes a request to reinstate water being lost from Paradise Dam.

Building Queensland will be completing a detailed business case for the long-term options for the dam but in the meantime, it is undertaking an accelerated assessment to shortlist the most viable options. This assessment was completed in February 2020 and is currently being considered by Government prior to public release.

The main options under consideration are:

- upgrading the dam to its original full supply level
- upgrading the dam to an optimised height 5-10 metres lower than its full supply level
- lowering the dam by a full 10 metres
- decommissioning the dam

The Building Queensland assessment will take into account the region's current and future need for water.

The independent Commission of Inquiry into Paradise Dam is focussing on the root cause of structural and stability issues. It will explore whether governance, processes and systems involved in the design, construction or commissioning of Paradise Dam contributed to that root cause. The independent inquiry has no limitations regarding the issues it can examine, including all matters associated with the design, construction and commissioning of the dam.

The independent Commission of Inquiry is scheduled to report on its findings by 30 April 2020.

Government and the community need to understand what has occurred in the original construction of Paradise Dam. We also need to look to the future. While safety is of paramount concern, so is water for irrigators, agriculture and business.

I provide you with this response for tabling in accordance with Standing Order 125(3). Any enquiries regarding this response can be referred to Mr Simon Zanatta, Chief of Staff, on telephone 3719 7360.

Yours sincerely



Dr Anthony Lynham MP
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