



Hon Glenn Butcher MP
Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing
Minister for Water

Our refs: CTS 16925/21
Your ref: A756195

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30 SEP 2021

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

Email: TableOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear ~~Mr Laurie~~ Neil,

Thank you for your letter of 2 September 2021, concerning petition No. 3512-21 received by the House on 9 April 2021, regarding raising Rookwood Weir.

The petition requests the House to do all within its power to ensure the height of Rookwood Weir's wall is raised by one metre, rather than 700 millimetres (mm). In doing so the petition contains certain assumptions that are incorrect, and I trust this response clarifies those inaccuracies.

The \$367.2 million Rookwood Weir is jointly funded by the State and Federal Governments, following strong advocacy from the Queensland Government that the Federal Government support the project and the people of Central Queensland. The Queensland Government advanced funds to support the Rookwood Weir in 2018 and without these funds the project would still be years away from completion. The State determined it would proceed funding alone before the Federal Government finally signed on to financially support the project in the second half of 2020.

The Lower Fitzroy River Infrastructure Project Detailed Business Case (2017) considered a weir height some 3 metres higher again than the current weir height. As the Premier and former Minister said on several occasions previously, during the detailed design stage, several significant challenges were identified that resulted in substantial increases in overall project costs, increasing the proposed construction cost by approximately \$200 million. When the Premier approached the Prime Minister in relation to these challenges and the opportunity for the Federal Government to contribute further to the project, the Prime Minister ruled out any further funding for Rookwood Weir. In July 2019, the Prime Minister confirmed both verbally and in writing that no further funding would be provided. The project was subsequently rescoped to provide the best possible outcome for Central Queensland, within the approved budget.

Rookwood Weir will provide significant opportunities for increased agricultural and industrial development and will boost water security for the Central Queensland region. The project has created over 100 regional jobs so far, including through the essential road and bridge upgrades. Construction of the weir itself is expected to provide a further 200 jobs, with 140 of those sourced locally and apprentices and trainees are expected to make up 15 per cent of construction jobs.

The project is on track with in river construction starting in April 2021 and the new workers camp, capable of accommodating up to 250 workers, becoming fully operational in March 2021.

Sunwater released its first invitation to tender for water sales last year and, in December 2020, I announced that all 30,000 megalitres was sold. The successful bidders will be pursuing expansion plans along the Fitzroy River and that means more local jobs and flow on impacts in the local supply chain.

In 2022, there will be a second tender for 7,500 megalitres in smaller lots of less than 500 megalitres targeted to support local farm development. Sunwater has developed a landholder support program in conjunction with Advance Rockhampton and Rockhampton Regional Council, to assist irrigators in the second tender.

Earlier this year, the Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk, Premier and Minister for Trade, announced that the weir height would be raised by 700mm, increasing the yield to 86,000 megalitres of medium priority water for water users.

When referring to volumes associated with Rookwood Weir, the yield is the volume of water that could be expected to be supplied by the weir in a year. This is linked to the hydrology of the catchment and climatic conditions. Yield is also linked to the expected reliability of the water supply. In the context of Rookwood Weir, yield is described as a volume of 'medium' priority water which describes a reliability of supply that is typically suited to irrigated agriculture.

With the additional 700mm in weir height announced earlier this year, the yield of the weir is now 86,000 ML of medium priority water. Prior to the Queensland Government's decision to increase the weir's height, the expected yield was 76,000 ML medium priority water. Accordingly, the weir will now yield more water than originally anticipated.

On 10 September 2021, I was pleased to announce the first concrete pours for the weir structure had just commenced. Once complete, Rookwood Weir will be the largest weir in Queensland.

I provide you with this response for tabling in accordance with Standing Order 125(3).

Any enquiries regarding this response can be referred to Ms Emily Taylor, Chief of Staff on (07) 3035 6170 or email regionaldevelopment@ministerial.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



GLENN BUTCHER MP
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