

Our ref: MF23/1831

Ms Melissa Gray
Healthy Rivers Dubbo
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DUBBO NSW 2830

Email: healthyriversdubbo@gmail.com

31 July 2023

Subject: Update on the Status of the Macquarie-Wambuul Water Security Project

Dear Ms Gray

Thank you for your email of 24 April 2023 to The Hon Rose Jackson MLC, Minister for Water, seeking an update on the Macquarie-Wambuul Water Security Project. The Minister thanks you for your congratulations on her appointment and looks forward to continuing to work with you in the future. She has asked me to respond on her behalf.

As you know, the Macquarie Valley has a highly variable climate, with severe droughts occurring, on average, once every 20 years for the last 125 years. Current studies suggest the region will face an even more volatile climate in the future with a higher chance of more frequent severe droughts occurring, as well as more severe, though less frequent, floods.

To help plan for these future climate risks, the NSW Government is investigating a suite of measures as set out in the long-list of options in the Draft Macquarie-Castlereagh Regional Water Strategy (RWS). The scope of the Macquarie-Wambuul Water Security Project is currently being reviewed to better align with the Draft Macquarie – Castlereagh RWS and to consider the future role of the Gin Gin Weir, if any, within it. The Macquarie-Castlereagh RWS is due for release later in 2023.

Water Infrastructure NSW will work closely with WaterNSW, the owner and operator of the Gin Gin Weir, on any future proposals. WaterNSW is in the early stages of investigating the installation of fish passage at the weir which will potentially provide 140km of uninterrupted fish passage on the Macquarie River between Narromine and Warren.

These investigations do not include any upgrade to the structure or modification to operations, except for minor adjustments that may be needed to accommodate a fishway. WaterNSW will also conduct a remaining life assessment of the 120-year-old weir to guide any future refurbishment requirements.

I note your concerns about the potential impacts on the Ramsar listed, internationally significant Macquarie Marshes, and can assure you that any impacts will be captured and addressed as part of the technical studies required for any proposed work.

Should you wish to discuss the matter further, I have arranged for Mr Scott Ferguson, Director Project Development in Water Infrastructure NSW, to be available. Mr Ferguson can be contacted on 0428 428 184.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason R. Gordon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jason Gordon

Acting CEO Water Infrastructure NSW