
 Adelaide Plains Council	7.5 Late Item Under Separate Cover
2 February 2021	

7.5 Gawler River Floodplain Management Projects – State Government Budget Commitment and Gawler River Floodplain Management Authority Charter Review Update

	7.5	Gawler River Floodplain Management Projects – State Government Budget Commitment and Gawler River Floodplain Management Authority Charter Review Update
	Department: Report Author:	Governance and Executive Office Chief Executive Officer
Date: 2 February 2021	Document Ref:	D21/5078

OVERVIEW

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to advise the Audit Committee of a funding commitment by the State Government to inject \$9 million into supporting four “no regrets” projects to improve flood management for the Gawler River. In addition, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) seeks to update the Audit Committee at the meeting on progress surrounding the Gawler River Floodplain Management Authority (GRFMA) Charter Review.

Background

The Chief Executive Officer was invited to a meeting on Thursday 26 November 2020 with a number of State Government Agency departmental heads, neighbouring council CEOs and the Chair and Executive Officer of the GRFMA to hear first-hand what Department for Environment and Water (DEW) is proposing by way of a funding stimulus package aimed at improving flood management for the Gawler River.

Provided for as **Attachment 1** is a copy of the resultant correspondence from Mr John Schultz, CEO of DEW, together with the PowerPoint presentation delivered to delegates at the meeting.

As the correspondence and PowerPoint discloses, DEW has proposed four “no regrets” projects which consists of a \$9 million funding package across the following platforms:

- Removal of trees following the Hillier bushfires
- Construction of a drainage system for Virginia
- New control structures and flood warning infrastructure
- Northern Floodway early works: existing levee banks and survey works

Discussion

Members will note from reading the attached correspondence that DEW have suggested that “...*this funding forms part of the State government’s economic stimulus package. It requires co-contribution commitment from relevant councils and needs to be delivered on ground over two years.*”

While the CEO commends the State Government for playing a leadership role in facilitating the delivery of funding to advance on-ground works, APC GRFMA Board Members, in consideration of DEW’s proposal, have raised a number of valid points requiring clarification, namely:

- How were these projects arrived at, what consultation occurred to arrive at these projects and do they provide the ‘best bang for buck’ by comparison to other potential projects?
- The co-contribution mandate spelled out in the letter and what this means for APC?
- Is this \$9 million stimulus package now the capped financial contribution by State Government to all GRFMA-related investigations and on-ground deliverables associated with the Northern Floodway?

In a series of discussions the CEO has had with fellow GRFMA Board Members recently, it appears that a number of member councils share APC’s concerns and have reservations around the potential need to co-contribute to projects that appear to be localised in nature. Further clarification is therefore needed so as to determine what projects the GRFMA would be responsible for (and in turn be expected to contribute 28.91% towards) versus what projects would remain as a sole partnership between DEW and the respective council. Further guidance on this issue, together with further debate on the projects identified by DEW, will occur at the GRFMA meeting scheduled for 11 February 2021.

Conclusion

Members will note that two sub groups will shortly be formed with APC to have representation on both, those sub groups being:

- Project Delivery Group to oversee the delivery of the four “no regrets” projects
- Business Case Group to oversee the development of the longer term solutions for flood management

It is the CEO’s intention to provide regular briefings to the Audit Committee throughout the year on all things GRFMA-related given the magnitude of the matters currently on foot (Stormwater Management Plan, Charter Review, Northern Floodway and Four ‘No Regrets’ Projects) and the associated Governance and Financial implications that come as a result.

GRFMA Charter Review Overview

The CEO will provide members with a brief overview on progress surrounding the GRFMA Charter Review at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

“that Audit Committee, having considered Item 7.5 – Gawler River Floodplain Management Projects – State Government Budget Commitment and Gawler River Floodplain Management Authority Charter Review Update, dated 2 February 2021, receives and notes the report.”

Attachments

1. Letter from Department for Environment and Water Chief Executive, Mr John Schutz dated 31 December 2020 and accompanying PowerPoint presentation



DEW-D0010879

31 December 2020

81-95 Waymouth Street
Adelaide
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide SA 5001
Australia
Ph: +61 8204 9000
www.environment.sa.gov.au

Mr James Miller
Chief Executive Officer
Adelaide Plains Council

Email: jcmiller@apc.sa.gov.au

Dear Mr Miller

Thank you for your attendance and contribution at the recent Gawler River Flood Management Meeting.

Management of the flood risk from the Gawler River is a complex and multi-faceted issue with no simple solution. The Department for Environment and Water as the Flood Hazard Leader in South Australia, has taken a leadership role garnering collaboration and co-ordination across agencies, local government, industry and the Commonwealth Government to better manage the flood risk on the Gawler River floodplain.

The \$9 million supports four “no regrets” projects to improve flood management for the Gawler River. The details of the projects nominated are outlined in more detail in the PowerPoint presentation enclosed with this letter. This funding forms part of the State government’s economic stimulus package. It requires co-contribution commitment from relevant councils and needs to be delivered on ground over two years.

At the recent meeting you attended with the GRFMA and state agencies there was general support for the State government’s leadership and approach.

At the meeting a leadership role by DEW was welcomed. There was also support for the four projects nominated for immediate work and acknowledgement of the need for co-contributions to ensure the funding can leverage further work towards long-term solutions. It was agreed by attendees to form a Gawler River Flood Management Steering Committee to provide strategic and co-ordinated leadership across state and local government. It was further agreed to form two sub groups:

- a Project Delivery Group to oversee the delivery of the four no regrets projects
- a Business Case Group to oversee the development of the longer term solutions for flood mitigation.

As your council is critical to the future upgrade and ongoing management of the Gawler River and associated flood and waterway infrastructure, I would appreciate a nomination

from your council for membership of these two groups by 15 January 2021 to Ms Khanh Nguyen via email (Khanh.Nguyen2@sa.gov.au). Both groups will report back to the Gawler River Flood Management Steering Committee.

The development of a Stormwater Management Plan (SMP), which is already in scoping phase, and further design work on the larger scale flood mitigation options are also important. Any business case will need to focus on the investment necessary to investigate and agree on the long term flood mitigation.

For further information regarding this matter, please contact Cate Hart, Executive Director Environment, Heritage and Sustainability within the Department for Environment and Water on cate.hart@sa.gov.au or (08) 8463 3497.

Yours sincerely



JOHN SCHUTZ
Chief Executive, Department for Environment and Water

Encl: 1. PowerPoint Presentation Gawler River Flood Management Projects

Gawler River Flood Management projects

State Government Budget Commitment

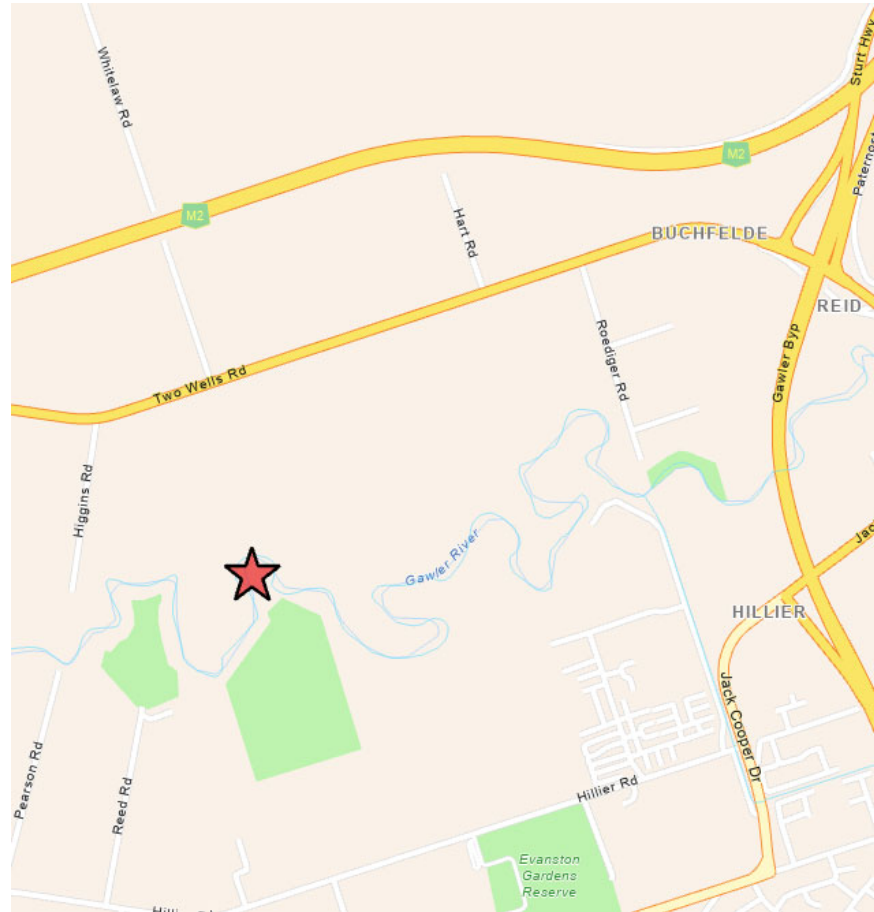


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State Government Budget Allocation

- \$ 9 million over three years
- Operating expenditure (grant)
- Delivered through Stormwater Management Fund
- Local government co-contribution details to be determined
- Any infrastructure constructed or upgraded to be owned by GRFMA or constituent council
- DEW to recruit dedicated project manager

Removal of trees following the Hillier bushfire



Removal of trees following the Hillier bushfire

- Large amount of trees and debris resulting from the fire
- Posing a risk of creating a blockage and causing flooding upstream or, if moved with flood waters, significantly impacting on infrastructure downstream.
- Cost is estimated to be between \$350 000 and \$370 000
- Work proposed to be undertaken in partnership with the Town of Gawler over a six month period.

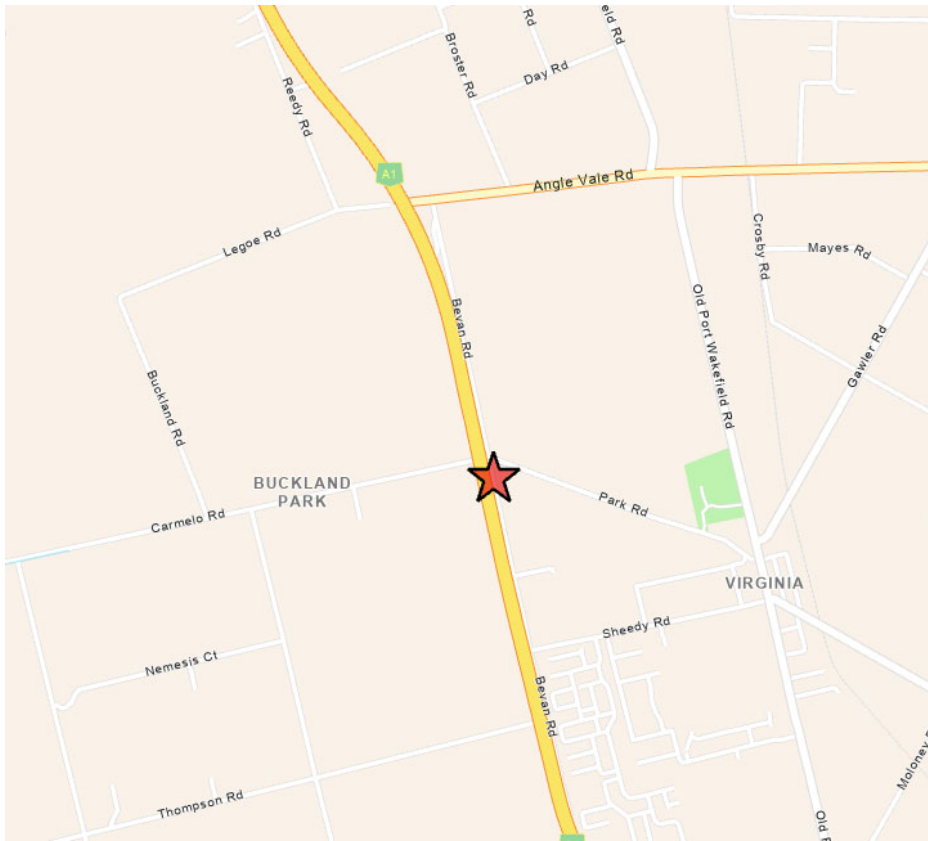


SOUTH
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Construction of a drainage system for Virginia (Carmelo and Park Road drain)



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Construction of a drainage system for Virginia (Carmelo and Park Road drain)

- Drainage system will protect housing in Virginia from flooding and shorten the duration that horticultural land is inundated
- The quicker the flood waters can subside, the greater the chance that inundated crops will survive.
- The drainage system has a Cost Benefit Ratio of 1.8 as identified in the draft Smith Creek Stormwater Management Plan.
- The project is estimated to cost \$3.8 million
- Proposed to be delivered in partnership with the City of Playford over a period of 18 months.



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New control structures (weirs) and flood warning infrastructure and review of flood warning levels



New control structures (weirs) and flood warning infrastructure and review of flood warning levels

- Bureau of Meteorology's forecasting and warning service limited by the lack of adequate flood warning infrastructure.
- New control structures will ensure a more reliable relationship between flow and depth for a gauge (Gawler-West and Nuriootpa)
- Gauging of tributary of North Para river
- Improve the timeliness and accuracy of flood forecasting and warnings.
- Ensure that warnings are relevant and understood by their audience.
- The project is estimated to cost \$1 million
- Delivered in partnership with GRFMA, SASES and the Bureau of Meteorology over 18 months



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Northern Floodway early works: existing levee banks and river survey and works



Northern Floodway early works: existing levee banks and river survey and works

- River condition works such as vegetation clearance, silt removal and revegetation where this is considered beneficial,
- Levee repair works, focus remediation on significant low points, existing failures and obvious defects.
- Does also not include the cost of easements or land acquisition to ensure ongoing maintenance can occur.
- Needs to be complemented by a full levee bank survey and development of a levee bank database and stakeholder engagement as outlined in the Improved Levee Bank Management Position paper
- Estimated to cost \$3.8 million, including project management costs, based on the estimates in the Northern Floodway prospectus
- Need to be delivered in partnership with GRFMA, DEW, DIT and Northern and Yorke Landscape Board/Green Adelaide over 2 years.



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