

# Stakeholder and Community Consultation

The requirements for the environmental assessment include undertaking consultation with relevant State Government agencies, public authorities and community groups, and to take into account comments made regarding the Project. A substantial amount of consultation had taken place prior to preparation of the EA Report and this is summarised in this chapter. This chapter also describes consultation which will occur during and following the public exhibition of the EA Report.

## 4.1 Consultation objectives

Large infrastructure projects usually have a range of stakeholders with an interest in the various issues associated with the development of an individual project. These typically include State government agencies, local government authorities, commercial and business interests, special interest and community groups, and local residents. The Tillegra Dam project is no exception.

Effective consultation is an important element of the Project. To facilitate this, a project-specific consultation strategy has been developed to meet the aims and interests of both HWC and stakeholders. This builds on the consultation that has taken place prior to preparation of the EA Report.

The strategy:

- Identifies key stakeholders, potential issues and management strategies
- Advises how stakeholders and the community would be informed and consulted throughout all stages of the Part 3A planning process
- Identifies methods to facilitate consideration of all issues raised by the stakeholders and the community, particularly in relation to social, economic and physical attributes of the Project

- Discusses mechanisms to allow stakeholder and community views to be considered and incorporated into the EA Report, the SOC's and the Submissions Report.

The approach taken focuses on the need for a balanced and satisfying outcome for stakeholders, the community and HWC.

## 4.2 Whole of Government Taskforce

In January 2008 the Minister for Water Utilities announced the establishment of a Whole of Government Taskforce (the 'Taskforce') to coordinate the State government's response to issues outside of the formal planning processes for the Tillegra Dam project. The goal of the Taskforce is to facilitate communication between Dungog Shire Council and key Government authorities on matters that are outside the formal planning process for Tillegra and examine issues/opportunities that may arise as a consequent result of the dam project.

Membership of the Taskforce comprises:

- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Dungog Shire Council
- Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD)
- Department of Water and Energy (DWE)
- Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA)
- NSW Tourism
- Tillegra Dam Community Reference Group (TDCRG)
- HWC.

Additional representatives from other State agencies such as Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC), Forests NSW, Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority (HCRCMA) would be brought in on an as needs basis to address any future emerging issues/opportunities.

While the Taskforce is not strictly part of the Project's consultation activities, relevant information gathered as part of these activities is provided to members via HWC.

The inaugural meeting of the Taskforce was conducted at Munni House on 20 February 2008. Key outcomes from the first meeting included:

- a commitment by the DSRD and HWC to consider funding options for an additional resource to assist Council to address the issues resulting from the Tillegra Dam project, and to identify opportunities for Council and community to maximise future benefits resulting from the Project
- an expansion of the work undertaken to date by the Tillegra Dam Community Reference Group (TDCRG), where potential economic and tourism opportunities requiring further investigation, consultation and market testing were identified. It was decided that following further investigation, the Taskforce would consult with the community on these issues
- a commitment to develop a draft Dungog Shire Land Use Strategy by the end of 2008 that would provide recommendations on:
  - ways to accommodate new economic/business opportunities
  - future land use within the Shire
  - social impact and environmental management considerations for the Shire

- a commitment to work towards resolving outstanding LEP amendments in relation to transition zones by the end of 2008
- a commitment to consider, by the next meeting, potential options for a way forward on key issues relating to the Shire's roads.

Additional Taskforce meetings have since been held. Key outcomes of these meetings included:

- confirmation of funding of \$100,000 each from HWC and the DSRD for a Strategic Project Manager for Dungog Shire Council who will work with the local community to develop economic opportunities for the area
- a commitment by the RTA to assist Council to work through priority issues associated with the Shire's regional roads
- a commitment by NSW Tourism to assist Council and HWC to identify tourism opportunities associated with the proposed Tillegra Dam project
- approval for the LEP panel to commence consultation with State government agencies and community with regard to transition zones, the intention being to finalise the necessary amendments by the end of 2008
- following receipt and consideration of comments from HWC, the RTA and the NRMA, finalisation of Council's Shire Access Routes report for submission to relevant State and Federal Ministers seeking assistance for funds to upgrade key roads in the Shire.

## 4.3 Consultation activities leading to EA Report preparation

### 4.3.1 Establishment of Tillegra Dam Community Reference Group

The TDCRG was established by HWC in early 2007. The purpose of the TDCRG is to:

- facilitate the flow of information between HWC and the local community
- support the community engagement process
- where necessary, provide advice to achieve improved Project and community outcomes.

The TDCRG operates under defined Terms of Reference and is intended to run for the duration of the environmental assessment phase of the Project. It meets monthly and additionally, as required.

The TDCRG's primary focus relates to matters regarding the environmental assessment and preliminary engineering phases of the Project. This consultative role involves the provision of advice and two-way community feedback to assist HWC's community engagement process to identify and assess local community views and values on the environmental, social and economic aspects of the Project.

The specific roles of the TDCRG are to:

- provide a two-way communication link between HWC, and the Dungog and Williams Valley communities
- provide a forum where matters related to the environmental and engineering assessment phases of the Project as well as the community engagement process, can be raised for discussion
- identify community interests/concerns and facilitate HWC in addressing these
- be a representative group that can validate and consider the broad range of community views, interests and issues related to the implementation of the Project
- be a well-informed source of information for community members who can advise on the progression of the Project, and to disseminate information about the Project into the community.

The TDCRG has been chaired by an independent facilitator engaged by HWC to coordinate the group's activities. The Mayor of Dungog Shire Council has acted as the deputy chair. Recently, the facilitator moved to an alternate project and as an interim measure, the TDCRG has been overseen by the deputy chair.

Membership of the TDCRG comprises:

- nine community and business representatives from the following organisations:
  - Dungog Shire Council (two councillors)
  - Dungog District Chamber of Commerce
  - Dungog Information and Neighbourhood Service
  - No Tillegra Dam Group
  - Williams River Water Users Association
  - Dungog Tourism Advisory Committee
  - Dungog Historical Society (DHS)
  - Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)
- four community members (representing residents from immediately below the proposed dam, from within the proposed inundation area, and above the proposed inundation area)
- three HWC representatives.

Subsequently, two subcommittees were established to focus on specific issues and provide recommendations on certain components of the Tillegra Dam project. These are:

- Quart Pot/Munni Cemetery Subcommittee, which has been dealing with the relocation of the existing Quart Pot/Munni Cemetery which is located within the inundation area
- Economic and Tourism Subcommittee, which has been considering potential economic and recreational opportunities for the Dungog area should the Project proceed.

Both subcommittees have provided valuable support to the TDCRG and HWC by providing advice on issue-specific matters and facilitating TDCRG-convened events. These include family gatherings related to relocation of the existing cemetery, dam safety briefings, informative road workshops as well as a suite of other activities to facilitate community sentiment on issues to be passed to the TDCRG and HWC.

#### 4.3.2 Salisbury Road relocation option development and preferred option

Around 15 kilometres of Salisbury Road (between Tillegra Bridge and Underbank) as well as some roads in the Quart Pot Creek area would be impacted by the proposed Tillegra Dam. Consultation activities in relation to this component of the Project included:

- consultation with Council regarding design and operational matters
- consultation with affected landowners regarding the southern and northern tie-ins to the existing Salisbury Road
- advertisements in the local paper seeking public comment on the preferred route
- distribution of newsletters and reply paid feedback forms
- community information sessions
- static displays at Munni House and at the Dungog Visitors Information Centre

- completion of a roads access route selection workshop.
- discussions with the Rural Fire Service (RFS) to determine access requirements for the relocation of the RFS station.

#### 4.3.3 Other activities

In addition to the establishment of the TDCRG, HWC has undertaken a range of consultation activities including:

- holding an open house every Wednesday at Munni House (twice weekly during November and December 2006) during which any interested person could call in and meet with HWC staff to discuss the Project
- holding an open day at Munni House to provide the community with the opportunity to meet and discuss aspects of the Project with road designers, geologists, terrestrial and aquatic ecologists, archaeologists and other specialist consultants engaged to work on the project by HWC
- media releases
- preparation and distribution of monthly e-newsletters
- providing updates on the HWC website
- preparation of a monthly community newsletter for publication in the Dungog Chronicle
- public information sessions
- monthly meetings with Council (with respect to the strategic planning investigations being undertaken by Planning Workshop Australia (PWA) on behalf of Council)
- conducting a briefing session for Dungog Shire councillors
- scheduled meetings with key stakeholders including several water user (irrigation) groups, recreational fishing associations, commercial fishing organisations, the Dungog Historical Society
- meetings with private landholders to discuss specific project issues related to their land
- ad hoc meetings and consultation with various interest groups as required.

These activities have continued during preparation of the EA Report and it is anticipated they would continue (possibly in a slightly different form) through the construction of the Project (see Section 4.6).

### 4.4 Consultation activities during EA Report preparation

A range of consultation activities have taken place during preparation of the EA Report. These are described briefly as follows.

#### 4.4.1 Planning focus meeting

Formal consultation with State and local government authorities was undertaken through a planning focus meeting (PFM). This was held on 11 October 2007 at Munni House. The purpose of the PFM was to provide an overview and history of the Project as well as explain the Project timetable, key features of the preferred option and to invite comment regarding key issues requiring further consideration in the planning process.

The PFM was convened by the DoP and attended by the following agencies and authorities:

- DECC
- DPI (Agriculture and Fisheries)

- HCRCMA
- NSW Maritime
- RFS
- Dungog Shire Council.

Following the PFM, the Director-General issued the requirements for the environmental assessment (Director-General's requirements – DGRs). These establish the form and scope of the environmental assessment. The DGRs also identify environmental assessment fees, consultation requirements, advertising, any need for an Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel, peer review requirements, need for a Statement of Commitments and the Department's prescribed environmental assessment public display period.

#### 4.4.2 Government agencies and public authorities

Various meetings have been held with individual government agencies and public authorities regarding specific aspects of the Project.

A number of meetings have been held with the DWE regarding clarification of the Part 3A process and integration of key objectives of the draft *Hunter Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources Water Sharing Plan* into the Project. These meetings have also been attended variously by representatives from DECC, DPI (Fisheries), and the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA.

NSW Health has been consulted in relation to potential water quality issues associated with the relocation of Quart Pot/Munni Cemetery. Advice received has been considered in preparation of the cemetery relocation plan (refer Working Paper H).

Connell Wagner's economists met with Council on 28 November 2007 to discuss issues of interest to Council with respect to assessment of the socioeconomic impacts of the Project on the Shire.

#### 4.4.3 Tillegra Dam Community Reference Group presentations

A number of presentations were made to the TDCRG to inform members of various aspects of the Project. These included:

- findings of the preliminary environmental assessment and key issues for further investigation in the detailed environmental assessment (Connell Wagner)
- scope and preliminary findings of various technical investigations undertaken for the environmental assessment (Connell Wagner)
- issues relating to management of safety issues associated with the dam once operational, including the peer review process for the related engineering investigations (NSW Dams Safety Committee/HWC).
- methodology and preliminary results of geological and geotechnical investigations.

#### 4.4.4 Salisbury Road relocation and Quart Pot Creek access

As part of the development of the Salisbury Road design, a value management (VM) workshop was held in Newcastle on 18 January 2008. This was attended by representatives from HWC, Council, Opus International Consultants (HWC's road designers), and specialist environmental and geotechnical consultants engaged in the Project.

Key issues for consideration included maintaining access to the township of Salisbury while maximising the aesthetic attraction of the road as a tourist route and maintaining its role as an access to the various rural properties in the vicinity.

The VM workshop participants agreed on a set of design parameters for the road and were able to further refine the potential alignments within the preferred corridor for the road. Issues relating to the construction and operation of the road were flagged for further consideration as part of the design process. Additional VM workshops were subsequently held with the road design consultant, HWC and Dungog Shire Council.

Three routes were identified to replace the access currently provided by Quart Pot Creek Road. Selection of the preferred route has included close consultation with affected property owners, including a site meeting with all affected parties.

#### 4.4.5 Relocation of Quart Pot/Munni Cemetery

The Project would result in the permanent inundation of Quart Pot/Munni Cemetery. The cemetery was established in 1915 with the first burial occurring in 1923 and the most recent in January 2008. The cemetery is of significant social value to the local community with several generations of local families buried there. As indicated in Section 4.3.1, a subcommittee of the TDCRG was established to focus specifically on the impacts of the Project on the cemetery, and to advise on HWC's preferred option to relocate the cemetery.

In addition to the social issues, relocation of the cemetery needs to be mindful of heritage and water quality issues. In order to facilitate a holistic consideration of all relevant issues, a management plan was prepared. This is provided as Working Paper H *Quart Pot/Munni Cemetery Relocation Plan*.

The Quart Pot/Munni Cemetery subcommittee was consulted during preparation of the Plan. This included:

- presentation of the draft Plan to subcommittee members
- invitation of comments and incorporation of feedback into the final Plan.

HWC also undertook consultation with NSW Health in relation to potential water quality issues associated with both the existing cemetery and the proposed new cemetery.

The relocation plan identifies the likely range of stakeholders who would need to be consulted should the Project be approved. Prior to the exhibition of the EA Report, the relocation plan was distributed to families directly affected by the proposal to relocate the cemetery. A specific open day at Munni House has also been held to allow affected parties to discuss the matter directly with Hunter Water staff.

#### 4.4.6 Aboriginal and contemporary heritage investigations

At the project's inception, HWC discussed the heritage conservation issues with both the NSW Heritage Office and the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs. In relation to Aboriginal heritage matters, HWC subsequently wrote to the Karuah, Wonnarua, Mindarriba and Worimi local Aboriginal land councils to advise of the proposal. An offer to brief each LALC on the Project's elements was made. Following this, a representative of the Karuah LALC was also appointed to the TDCGR.

The actual cultural heritage investigations proceeded in two stages. The first stage was high level, intended to identify key issues and matters of interest, to inform a more focussed second stage of investigations and targeted fieldwork.



Investigations undertaken for Aboriginal cultural heritage investigations were conducted in accordance with the DECC guidelines for community consultation.

### **Stage 1**

As part of the Stage 1 heritage investigations, members of the community were invited to contribute their knowledge of any specific heritage items or special places in and around the area proposed for Tillegra Dam.

Representatives of the DHS and LALCs also provided assistance in identifying heritage items. The DHS put out a request for photographs and information relating to the area for input into the Project and to be placed in a Tillegra Dam album that will be held by the DHS at the Dungog Museum and provided to the Dungog Library Reserve.

Information provided through the consultation process was used to inform the second round of heritage investigations.

### **Stage 2**

A key activity in the second round of investigations was the holding of an open day at Munni House held on 5 March 2008. The aim of the day was to:

- gather additional heritage information from the local community
- validate information on heritage already identified
- provide the opportunity to present and discuss the findings of the preliminary heritage assessment to the local community
- establish an oral history register for members of the local community who may be interested in participating in oral history interviews
- support HWC's ongoing community consultation and engagement processes
- continue to establish and build good relationships with the local community
- enable members of the local community to participate, communicate, discover and discuss their own history of the area.

Members of the DHS were available throughout the day to facilitate the various activities. HWC representatives and Connell Wagner's heritage consultants were also present.

Around 15 people attended the open day providing the heritage consultants with the opportunity to hear first hand a range of stories about people and places in the area. Participants also provided a range of material, such as personal letters and photos, to provide a record of the area's history. The outcomes from the day were incorporated into the specialist investigations (Working Papers L and M) supporting the EA Report.

Additionally, the Stage 2 Aboriginal heritage investigations included:

- inviting expressions of interest (EoI) from the community to be involved in the development of the heritage assessment methodology and have the opportunity to contribute their cultural knowledge
- inviting EoI applicants to participate in an escorted tour of the work sites, or be directly involved in the fieldwork
- the short term employment of two Aboriginal representatives to assist the heritage consultants with their field investigations (which involved the excavation of test pits and scrapes to look for artefacts and other evidence of occupation).



#### 4.4.7 Preparation of draft integrated land use plan

Maintenance of water quality in the storage would require the establishment and/or continuation of sustainable management of land both immediately adjacent to the storage and further afield in the upper Williams River catchment. This would occur on land owned by HWC and by other parties. Development would be generally controlled by Council through its local environmental plan (LEP) but HWC would also have an interest with regard to activities which could impact on water quality.

The dam, or more strictly the storage, also represents a potential community asset for recreation, particularly as HWC's preferred operational strategy is to maintain water levels between 90-100 per cent of full supply level (FSL) outside of drought periods. Permitting use of the storage and adjacent HWC-owned land for recreational purposes would allow additional social and economic benefits to be derived from the Project.

As part of the public exhibition of options for the relocation of Salisbury Road, the community was provided with the opportunity to make preliminary comment on the type of recreational activities it would like to see on and around the storage.

Of the 110 respondents, the majority favoured passive recreational activities. The most supported activities included canoeing, fishing, picnic areas, rowing boats, swimming and sail boating. Least favoured activities were wakeboarding, seaplanes, high-powered boats, trail bikes and four-wheel driving.

A draft integrated land use plan (ILUP, refer Working Paper N) has been prepared for use as a management tool for HWC in this regard. It includes information about recreational opportunities as well as other management considerations such as water quality and the relocation of the RFS station.

Key elements of the ILUP, particularly those related to recreational access and opportunities, have been progressed as a result of representations received from the TDCRG. These matters have subsequently been followed up through consultation with a number of government agencies including:

- Department of Health, regarding the likely classification of the storage and appropriateness of on-water recreation activities
- RFS, regarding possible alternative locations and layout of the new RFS station
- DPI (Fisheries), regarding the possibility of future fish stocking in the dam
- NSW Maritime, regarding permissible boating activities for the storage and potential funding opportunities for boat ramp(s).
- DECC regarding the management of flora and fauna.

### 4.5 Specific issues raised during consultation

#### 4.5.1 Government authorities

The PFM(planning focus meeting) was the primary mechanism for government authorities to be consulted through the planning and environmental assessment process. Following the PFM, each government authority submitted a detailed list of issues to the Department of Planning which assisted with the formulation of the Director General's requirements (DGRs).

As noted in Section 4.4.2, beyond the PFM, ongoing discussions occurred with DWE, DECC, DPI and the HCRCMA in relation to water management issues.

The primary matters of relevance broached during these discussions, centred on the need to provide operational releases from the dam to maintain both environmental, irrigation and other water use

needs below the dam. A holistic management regime including a consideration of not only the proposed dam but also Chichester Dam, Seaham Weir and Grahamstown Dam was encouraged.

HWC presented various potential options for transparent and translucent flow regimes from the proposed dam, for the agencies consideration, as well as material concerning potential environmental issues and how they could be addressed.

HWC met with these agencies to discuss design considerations for the dam including most notably, matters that should be taken into account when designing the proposed multi-level offtake tower. HWC also met individually with each agency to discuss matters of specific interest to each body.

These include:

- DWE and DPI, to discuss how downstream flows could be maintained to ensure existing irrigation rights were maintained. This matter is discussed within Chapter 10 and Working Paper D *Environmental Flows and River Management*
- DPI, to discuss impacts on aquatic ecosystems and to negotiate an aquatic river management and offset package. This matter is addressed in Chapter 10, the statement of commitments and Working Papers A (*Water Quality and Hydrology*), B (*Fluvial Geomorphology*), C (*Aquatic Ecology*) and D (*Environmental Flows and River Management*)
- HCRCMA and DECC, to discuss terrestrial ecology impacts and native vegetation management principles; 'like for like' offsetting principles were encouraged by these agencies. Management and mitigation strategies proposed by HWC are detailed within the statement of commitments
- NSW Maritime, to gauge support for the dams use for recreation and the potential for assistance to be sought in the provision of boating facilities. NSW Maritime supports recreational use of the storage for boating enthusiasts and can assist with the appropriate management of these activities. These matters are noted and addressed within Working Paper N *Integrated Land Use Plan*
- Dungog Shire Council, to assist with sponsorship and oversight of a land use planning review to allow the planning documents for the local government area to be optimised, in response to land use changes that may occur as a result of the dam. This work has been carried out as a separate process under the direct oversight of Council as it is most specifically relevant to the local environmental plan and other council strategies under its care and control
- The Rural Fire Service (RFS, both local and State levels), to discuss possible locations for a new fire station and appropriate, standard building designs. Appropriate locations and re-establishment of the RFS building is noted in Working Paper N *Integrated Land Use Plan* and the statement of commitments
- The Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, to discuss the Project in depth at its inception, on submission of the projects referral and finally post referral, to discuss assessment expectations and preliminary results. Project aspects relevant to matters of national environmental significance are discussed in Chapter 10 of this report and a separate report attached in Appendix 6 (Tillegra Dam Ramsar Wetland Impact Assessment).

#### 4.5.2 Tillegra Dam Community Reference Group

The TDCRG consists of a broad range of stakeholder groups with a diversity of interests. During monthly meetings, a total of 239 different matters were raised for the consideration and attention of HWC. All matters and minutes of each meeting are publicly available from the HWC website. A summary of the issues raised is provided in Table 4.1.

A number of matters raised were beyond the scope of the specific environmental assessment process

for the dam. These included discussions on the efficacy of existing mobile telecommunications, road maintenance works, roadside slashing and general road improvements, groundwater monitoring for service stations and fuel depots, the Clarence Town Sewerage Scheme and other similar matters of interest. These matters were either referred directly to the body responsible for their management or passed across for consideration by the Whole of Government Taskforce.

**TABLE 4.1** ISSUES RAISED THROUGH THE TDCRG

ISSUE RAISED	HOW ADDRESSED/COMMUNICATED
<b>About the dam:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is the dam needed?</li> <li>• Size</li> <li>• Appearance</li> <li>• Inundation area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing Information provided to TDCRG</li> <li>• Information provided in the monthly newsletter in the Dungog Chronicle and the e-newsletter</li> <li>• Detailed in Chapters 1-7 of EA Report</li> </ul>
<b>Construction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of workers</li> <li>• Provision of services</li> <li>• Noise/dust</li> <li>• Work hours</li> <li>• Location of compound</li> <li>• Timeframe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information has been provided at TDCRG meetings</li> <li>• Meetings have been held with individual residents downstream of the proposed dam</li> <li>• Information has been provided in the monthly e-newsletter and the Dungog Chronicle newsletter</li> <li>• The ICN Website is available for people to register their services</li> <li>• These matters are addressed within Chapter 6, 7, 9, 15, 16, 17 of this report and Working Papers J, K, N and O</li> </ul>
<b>Economic benefits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on rates</li> <li>• Loss of farming land</li> <li>• Potential for recreational use</li> <li>• Tourism opportunities</li> <li>• Fish stocking</li> <li>• Bike track</li> <li>• Boat ramps, camping grounds</li> <li>• Visitor information centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison has been ongoing with Dungog Shire Council</li> <li>• A socioeconomic assessment has been prepared (Working Paper G) as part of the EA Report</li> <li>• An Economic and Tourism Sub-Group of the TDCRG was established</li> <li>• A Strategic Projects Management Position in Council was created and is funded by HWC and DSRD</li> <li>• The Dungog Business Investment Fund has been established and is funded by HWC and DSRD</li> <li>• A draft integrated land use plan has been developed for the EA Report (Working Paper D)</li> <li>• Information on potential benefits and recreational use of the dam has been provided in the monthly e-Newsletter and Dungog Chronicle newsletter</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental impacts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flora and fauna</li> <li>• Threatened species</li> <li>• Aboriginal heritage</li> <li>• European heritage</li> <li>• Tree planting</li> <li>• River flows</li> <li>• Riparian users</li> <li>• Environmental flows</li> <li>• Downstream irrigators</li> <li>• Flood impacts downstream</li> <li>• Water quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information has been provided to the TDCRG meetings</li> <li>• Detailed information is provided in this EA Report</li> <li>• The Williams River Water Users Association is represented on the TDCRG</li> <li>• The Dungog Historical Society is represented on the TDCRG</li> <li>• The Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council is represented on the TDCRG and the DECC interim heritage consultation guidelines adopted for the project.</li> <li>• A public open day was held at Munni House to discuss heritage impacts with the community</li> <li>• A public open day was held at Munni House to discuss the investigations undertaken as part of the EA process</li> <li>• Meetings with relevant regulators (DWE, DECC, DPI) have been ongoing</li> <li>• Information has been provided in the monthly e-newsletter and the Dungog Chronicle newsletter</li> </ul>

ISSUE RAISED	HOW ADDRESSED/COMMUNICATED
<b>Geotechnical/dam safety:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earthquake and flood</li> <li>• Potential for project cost escalation</li> <li>• Budget</li> <li>• Dams Safety Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant geotechnical reports have been released and are publicly available on the HWC website</li> <li>• An Independent Peer Review Panel was established and has released comments on the work undertaken</li> <li>• Information summarising geotechnical findings are provided in Chapter 5 of the EA Report.</li> <li>• The NSW Dams Safety Committee has been presented with findings from investigations and has given in principle endorsement of the findings</li> <li>• Information has been provided to the TDCRG meetings</li> <li>• A Public Information Session was held to outline the NSW Dams Safety Committee's role</li> <li>• Information has been provided in the monthly e-newsletter and Dungog Chronicle newsletter</li> </ul>
<b>Landholdings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lot sizes</li> <li>• Land purchases</li> <li>• Compulsory acquisition</li> <li>• First right of refusal clause</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on general land purchase issues have been provided to the TDCRG meetings – specific discussions on individual purchases does not form part of the TDCRG Terms of Reference.</li> <li>• Negotiations with individual landholders have been undertaken</li> <li>• Discussions have been ongoing with Council regarding a review of the LEP and lot sizes (funded by HWC)</li> <li>• First right of refusal clauses have been incorporated into lease back contracts</li> </ul>
<b>Planning approval process:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the process works</li> <li>• Federal Government approval required</li> <li>• Why Part 3A?</li> <li>• Major or critical infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A representative from the Department of Planning attended a TDCRG meeting to explain the planning approval process</li> <li>• The project was declared critical infrastructure by the Minister for Planning and information provided to a TDCRG meeting</li> <li>• The EA Report is the key document produced as part of the approval process</li> <li>• A referral was made to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts for consideration under the EPBC Act</li> <li>• Information has been provided in the monthly e-newsletter and the Dungog Chronicle newsletter</li> <li>• An overview of planning matters is provided in Chapter 8 of this report.</li> </ul>
<b>Roads/access/infrastructure:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access during construction</li> <li>• Upgrade telecommunications</li> <li>• Access to Quart Pot Creek</li> <li>• Standard of new roads</li> <li>• Relocation of services, eg power, telephones</li> <li>• Impact on roads from construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A workshop was held to provide information on the road options and receive feedback from the community</li> <li>• Information has been provided to the TDCRG meetings</li> <li>• Information has been provided in the monthly e-newsletter and the Dungog Chronicle newsletter</li> <li>• Liaison with DSC has been ongoing</li> <li>• An overview of road access and infrastructure is provided within chapter 6 of this report and within Working Paper N <i>Draft Integrated Land Use Plan</i></li> </ul>

ISSUE RAISED	HOW ADDRESSED/COMMUNICATED
<p><b>Quart Pot/Munni Cemetery:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocation of cemetery</li> <li>• Future of Quart Pot Cemetery</li> <li>• Alternate cemetery site</li> <li>• Closure date of cemetery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Cemetery Sub-group of the TDCRG was established to work through issues</li> <li>• A Cemetery Relocation Plan was developed and distributed to all families impacted by the relocation of the cemetery; the relocation plan forms part of the EA report (Working Paper H)</li> <li>• An alternate cemetery site has been identified through community consultation with affected families and additional input received from the cemetery sub-group of the TDCRG</li> <li>• Open days for the families have been held</li> <li>• Information relevant to the cemetery is provided in Chapters 6, 13, 16, and Working Papers H and N</li> </ul>

### 4.5.3 Irrigation groups

The Williams River Water Users Association, the Williams River Care Association as well as water users of the Hunter / Paterson tidal pool were briefed and consulted to discuss issues related to water quantity, quality and general availability, as well as sustainable management of the river as a whole. Several meetings were held with the Williams River Water Users Association. The Williams Water Users Association raised additional issues related to the potential use of water from the dam for irrigation purposes. While the dam is not proposed to be used to supply irrigation water, a flow regime has been developed to ensure that existing river flows are maintained in low to medium flow classes, ensuring that existing irrigation rights are maintained. Details are provided in Chapter 10 and Working Paper D *Environmental Flows and River Management*.

Water use from the Williams River is managed under the provisions of the NSW *Water Management Act 2000* and a subordinate water sharing plan (in preparation) prepared in consultation with the community. Accordingly, HWC can help ensure that sustainable water use occurs from the river by providing an appropriate environmental/operational release regime. However, the manner in which water extraction occurs by other licensed users is ultimately a matter for the water sharing plan, administered by DWE.

### 4.5.4 Dungog Historical Society

Throughout the Project, the Dungog Historical Society has been a significant contributor to heritage investigations and studies commissioned for the EA Report. Members of the Society accompanied archaeologists from AHMS Pty Ltd throughout the project area to ensure all heritage items of interest were identified. The Society also provided advice to heritage consultants ERM Pty Ltd on the location of specific items within the landscape.

The Society has expressed an interest in heritage communication materials being produced through the project, to conserve the areas history. This includes the recording of oral histories and production of communication material, such as books recording the regions heritage. Heritage items will be salvaged from the project area and work undertaken to record and communicate the regions history. These matters are addressed in the Project's statement of commitments.

#### 4.5.5 Rural Fire Service (local brigade)

The local Bendolba volunteer RFS members were consulted through discussions with the brigade captain on the best possible location for a new fire station. The matter was subsequently discussed with all members of the group and three potential general locations for a new station noted for HWC's consideration. A preferred site has been identified (refer Working Paper N *Draft Integrated Land Use Plan*), however as alternate sites could be facilitated, additional feedback would be welcomed at any time from the local brigade, as well as the broader community, particularly during the public exhibition period designated for this report. HWC will work with members of the RFS to ensure that the existing infrastructure is replaced to RFS standard, at a location that suits the needs of the brigade.

As the existing site is an asset provided by Dungog Shire Council, the matter was also discussed with Council to seek general agreement on making a new replacement site available.

#### 4.5.6 Local landholders

Every Wednesday for approximately the last two years, HWC officers have travelled to Munni House located within the proposed Project area to speak to affected landholders. Land management, lease arrangements and general property acquisition issues characterise the majority of issues raised and addressed on the merits of each case.

HWC has also met with landholders and lessees with interests directly below the proposed location of the dam wall and discussed noise, dust and visual amenity issues, as well road route issues across the wider project area that intersect private property.

Each issue raised by landholders is specific to their respective cases. HWC has committed to co-operatively work with affected landholders to resolve each issue as they arise as constructively as possible.

### 4.6 Consultation activities during EA Report exhibition

The public exhibition of the EA Report provides an opportunity for further comment to be made on the Project by all interested parties. This is an important element of the consultation process.

Fact sheets would be prepared to accompany the EA Report exhibition and would provide summary information on specific aspects of the Project. This would include guidance on how to make a submission.

A number of information sessions are planned during the exhibition of the EA Report to provide the public with the opportunity to ask questions about details in the EA Report and to allow HWC to gather further information for consideration in the assessment process.

Advertising would be used to:

- make people aware of the EA Report exhibition, information days and display locations
- advise where and how people can make a submission on the EA Report
- inform people about the availability of contact details.

Engineering, geological and geotechnical reports relevant to the Tillegra Dam proposal would also be made publicly available on the HWC website during the exhibition period.

## 4.7 Ongoing consultation

Consultation would continue after the EA Report exhibition period. Specific activities would include making the Preferred Project Report (if prepared) publicly available. If the Project is approved, the Minister for Planning's approval and any associated conditions, together with HWC's determination would also be made publicly available.

Approvals for major infrastructure projects have usually required further consultation to be undertaken, principally during the construction phase. These have included:

- advertisement of activities in relation to forthcoming works over a specified period (usually three months)
- provision of advice in relation to traffic disruptions, temporary detours, noisy construction work, and construction activities required to be undertaken outside of standard working hours
- publication of monitoring data and associated reports on the project web site
- preparation of a community involvement plan to facilitate communication activities with affected communities
- establishment and maintenance of a display centre to provide information on various aspects of the project during construction.

Should the Project be approved, a similar range of consultation activities would be considered.



