

2. Consultation Activities

Chapter 4 of the EA Report provides a detailed account of the consultation activities undertaken from the lead up to the public exhibition of the EA Report to date in relation to the Proposal. These are summarised briefly as follows and an update of additional consultation since then is also provided.

2.1 Consultation prior to exhibition of the EA Report

A diverse range of stakeholder consultation activities were undertaken prior to the exhibition of the EA Report. A summary of the key consultation activities are listed in Table 2.1 together with a brief description of the objectives and/or outcomes of the individual activities.

Table 2.1 Consultation activities

Activity (EA Report reference)	Objectives/Outcomes
Whole of Government Taskforce (Section 4.2)	The goal of the Taskforce was to facilitate communication between Dungog Shire Council and key Government authorities on matters outside of the formal planning process for Tillegra Dam and to examine issues/opportunities that may arise as a result of the dam project.
Tillegra Dam Community Reference Group (TDCRG) (Sections 4.3.1 and 4.4.3)	<p>The TDCRG was established by Hunter Water in early 2007 to facilitate the flow of information between Hunter Water and the local community, to support the community engagement process, and to, where necessary, provide advice and received feedback to achieve improved Project and community outcomes.</p> <p>Two subcommittees were formed: one to facilitate commentary on the relocation of the existing Quart Pot/Munni Cemetery which is located within the inundation area and the other to consider potential economic and recreational opportunities for the Dungog area should the Project proceed.</p> <p>Various presentations were made to the TDCRG during the preparation of the environmental assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings of the PEA and key issues for further investigation in the detailed environmental assessment Scope and preliminary findings of various technical investigations undertaken for the environmental assessment Issues relating to management of safety issues associated with the dam once operational, including the peer review process for related engineering investigations Methodology and preliminary results of geological and geotechnical investigations <p>Feedback from the TDCRG representatives was taken into consideration in finalising the EA Report.</p>
Planning Focus Meeting (Section 4.4.1)	The PFM was held with key public authorities and provides a formal opportunity for these agencies to consider the Project and provide comments to DoP to inform the development of the DGRs.
Individual meetings with selected government agencies and public authorities (Section 4.4.2)	Various meetings were held throughout the preparation of the EA Report. These meetings facilitated the transfer of information between stakeholders to inform Hunter Water and aid in the preparation of the EA Report.
'Open house' meetings	These were held weekly at Munni House with Hunter Water staff being available to the local community to provide responses to specific issues relating to the Project.

Activity (EA Report reference)	Objectives/Outcomes
Salisbury Road relocation (Section 4.3.2 and 4.4.4)	<p>Consultation with various stakeholders (council, landowners, community, RFS) to discuss option for Salisbury Road relocation. Process aided selection of preferred option.</p> <p>Value adding workshop, aimed at maintaining access to the township of Salisbury while maximising the aesthetic attraction of the road as a tourist route and it's roles as access to local rural properties.</p>
Aboriginal community representatives' participation in fieldwork	Effective engagement of Aboriginal stakeholders in accordance with DECCW consultation guidelines
Draft Integrated Land Use Plan	Effective engagement of public authorities and the community to optimise identification of compatible land use and recreation opportunities that could occur on and around the Tillegra dam storage and provide ongoing benefit locally and more widely

Many additional consultation initiatives were undertaken (refer Section 4.3.3 of EA Report) by Hunter Water, including:

- Media releases
- Monthly E-Newsletters
- Hunter Water website updates
- Monthly contributions to Dungog Chronicle Newsletter
- Briefing sessions to Dungog Shire Councillors
- Scheduled meeting with key Community Organisations
- Irrigation Groups
- Dungog Historical Society
- Scheduled meetings with Private Landholders
- Ad hoc meetings with Interest Groups.

2.2 Consultation during exhibition of the EA Report

The EA Report was placed on public exhibition by DoP from 10 September 2009 to 13 November 2009. The exhibition process allows the public, community groups or government agencies to provide comment on the proposal and raise specific issues relating to the environmental assessment of the Project. This consultation process is a key process in ensuring that a robust assessment of environmental impacts is presented in the EA Report and aids the Minister for Planning in the assessment of the Project.

At the request of Hunter Water, DoP extended the consultation period (65 days) to allow for sufficient time for a considered response by stakeholders when preparing a submission to the Department.

Hunter Water facilitated a series of community information sessions during the exhibition of the EA Report. The sessions were held to provide an opportunity for the community to review the EA Report and discuss specific concerns with Hunter Water staff. Advertisements were placed in relevant local newspapers and on the internet to give notice of the sessions. In total 39 members of the public attended the information sessions as follows;

- Dungog – Doug Walter's Pavilion – 9 to 12 noon, Saturday 19/09/2009 – 5 attendees
- Gresford – School of performing arts – 2 to 5pm, Saturday 19/09/2009 – 3 attendees
- Port Stephens Tomaree Library – 10 to 2pm, Saturday 26/09/2009 – nil attendees
- Maitland Library – 10 to 2pm – Sat 10/10/2009 – 3 attendees

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- Wallsend Library – 4:30 to 7:30pm – Thursday 15/10/2009 - 2 attendees
 - Newcastle Library – 10 to 1pm – Saturday 17/10/2009 - 13 attendees
 - Toronto Library – 9:30 to 12 – Saturday 24/10/2009 - 4 attendees
 - Swansea Library – 9:30 to 11:30 – Saturday 31/10/2009 - 6 attendees
 - Charlestown Library – 10:30 to 12:30 – Saturday 6/11/2009 - 3 attendees.

2.3 Future consultation

Should the Project be approved, the Minister for Planning's approval and associated conditions would be made publicly available from the DoP website. Similar information would be made available by the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts should Commonwealth approval be provided in accordance with any relevant provision of the EPBC Act.

Ongoing consultation would continue following project approval. Consultation activities would occur predominantly during the construction phase of the Project and may include:

- 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 various aspects of the Project during construction.

