

Gawler River Floodplain Management Authority

Adelaide Hills Council, Adelaide Plains Council, The Barossa Council,
Town of Gawler, Light Regional Council, City of Playford

Key Outcomes Summary

Gawler River 2016 Flood Review

The 16/2/17 GRFMA meeting received the draft Gawler River 2016 Flood Review report which was commissioned to carry out a hydrological review of the 2016 Flood, evaluate the floodplain model performance and to review options for flood mitigation in the Lower Gawler River, in association with stakeholders.

Following consultation with constituent councils the GRFMA resolved to support key report recommendations and to seek State and Federal Government funding support to facilitate work on the ground.

The Gawler River 2016 Flood Review report provides three recommendations for works to be undertaken and provides first stage indicative costs of \$27 million.

- a. proposed Gawler River northern floodway,
- b. upgrade and maintenance of the levee system and
- c. management of silt and pest vegetation;

The GRFMA has since engaged with Ian Hunter MLC, Minister for Sustainability Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and River Murray and Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water to identify and further develop the most appropriate solution designs, costings and funding mechanisms required by Local, State and Federal Governments and other funding partners and beneficiaries.

Minister Hunter has advised that the State Government is supportive of a conditional funding contribution to the \$27 Million flood mitigation recommendations of the Gawler River 2016 Flood Review.

Minister Hunter referred to the recent Brownhill Keswick Creek funding arrangement as a basis for any state funding consideration. The proposed funding model for Brownhill Keswick Creek is that *the three spheres of government – Commonwealth, the SA State Government and local government (comprising the five catchment councils) each contribute one third of the works construction (capital) cost based on the 10-year construction program.*

At time of writing this report indications are the Federal Government is giving consideration of funding support but no further details were available.

Consequently, the relevant funding mix outcome for the proposal at this time is uncertain.

The GRFMA have resolved that in regard to the GRFMA 2017/18 Budget process and specifically in respect of constituent council 2017/18 budget processes that councils be advised in relation to the \$27 Million Northern Floodway project proposal that a separate consultation process at the relevant time, will be undertaken with councils by the GRFMA on the solution designs, costings and funding mechanisms required by Local, State and Federal Governments

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and other funding partners. Councils and the GRFMA should then subsequently consider the most appropriate process to recognise and achieve required contributions.

Feasibility of raising the Bruce Eastick North Para Flood Mitigation Dam

The GRFMA previously commissioned a body of work to investigate the feasibility of raising the height of the Bruce Eastick North Para Flood Mitigation Dam as an option to mitigate downstream flooding events.

A resultant report by AECOM indicates it is technically feasible to raise the height of the Dam (ie no apparent insurmountable technical problems); however, it will be more about what the cost will be to do so and relevant cost/benefit ratio outcomes. Current best cost estimates to raise the height of the dam by 10 metres indicates a cost of \$61.9 M with a low and high range cost estimate of \$37.1M and \$92.9 M respectively.

The GRFMA has resolved to defer further consideration of raising the Dam proposal until outcomes of any proposed work on the lower Gawler River, as recommended in the 2016 Gawler River Flood Review report, are completed and reviewed and the potential future funding availability to implement works is clearer.

2017/2020 GRFMA Business Plan and 2017/18 Annual Budget.

The 2017/2020 GRFMA Business Plan has now been reviewed and the GRFMA 2017/18 Annual Budget has been drafted. Copies of both documents were provided to constituent councils for consideration and subsequent feedback to the GRFMA. The Business Plan and Annual Budget will be considered at the 15 June 2017 GRFMA Meeting.

The draft annual budget proposes a 4% increase (which is a total additional revenue increase of \$3,056) in council contributions to the Authority. The 4% principally relates to provisions to meet additional costs that GRFMA will incur in pursuing State and Federal Government funding to deliver the 2016 Gawler River Flood Review recommendations.

The budget does not contain any proposal for council contributions to the \$27 Million infrastructure investment. As indicated above a separate consultation process at the relevant time, will be undertaken with councils by the GRFMA on the solution designs, costings and funding mechanisms required by Local, State and Federal Governments and other funding partners.

Review of GRFMA Charter

A notice of motion to review the GRFMA Charter was not supported at the 28/4/17 GRFMA meeting.

The proposed \$27 Million Northern Floodway project is a key matter which has initiated this motion. It follows a previous resolution (*GRB 16/0026 Review of Contributions*) that the GRFMA not review the Charter until such time as flood mitigation infrastructure is costed.

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The intent of the motion was to ensure all councils are aware of the percentage rates of contribution each council makes to the Authority and noted some small councils have a smaller ratepayer base and limited capacity to pay.

Debate on the motion noted further details are required on what the actual \$27 M Northern Floodway project entails and the funding parameters required need to be clarified. Also, the Northern Floodway option is not seen as the only solution by constituent councils and there is strong support for a whole of Gawler River 20 ARI and 100 ARI Floodplain management approach.

Review of the constitution to “change” the contribution funding formulae at this time may not necessarily be the best option or only option as clause 10.7 of the GRFMA Charter provides opportunity for future consideration.

Clause 10.7 “The Board on behalf of the Authority may enter into separate funding arrangements with Constituent Councils and with any State or Federal Government or their agencies in respect of any project undertaken or to be undertaken by or on behalf of the Authority”.

Subsequently the GRFMA resolved to form a focus group to develop a strategic pathway to consider proposed civil construction works and political matters associated with the recommended works to be undertaken in the lower reaches of the Gawler River. Each constituent council will be provided opportunity to comment on the proposed strategic pathway once drafted.

Operational activities

Work has now been completed in removing the large amounts of vegetation and silt that had been deposited over the trash racks at the base of the Bruce Eastick North Para Flood Mitigation Dam. The trash had been deposited as result of the recent flood events and removal of the trash before onset of winter will ensure effective discharge of water downstream during future rain events.

The GRFMA has been working with Natural Resources Adelaide and Mt Loft Ranges and adjacent land holders M/s JW and LD Philips, regarding management of weeds which germinated upstream of the Dam as a result of the flooding event. Weed spraying of Bathurst Burr and Castor Oil has now been completed.

The GRFMA has also been working with Natural Resources Adelaide & Mt Loft Ranges in support of Natural Resources funding assistance to councils and landholders for other weed control and weed vegetation removal projects along the Gawler River.

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GRFMA Committees

Process of review and renewal of membership of the GRFMA Audit Committee and the GRFMA Technical Assessment Panel have now been substantially completed. Endorsement of the nominated Audit Committee members will now be sought from each of the constituent councils.

Policies

Development of new GRFMA policies to be undertaken include;

- Asset Management Plan, Bruce Eastick North Para Flood Mitigation Dam;
- Management and operation of GRFMA cash reserves.

Service Recognition of outgoing Executive Officer

During the 28/4/17 GRFMA meeting morning tea break the GRFMA Chair presented a small gift to Mr. Dean Gollan in recognition of his 5 years of service as Executive Officer GRFMA from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2016.

The New Executive Officer Mr David Hitchcock having commenced duties on 1/1/2017