

**20) LATE ITEM REPORT - COWRA TO CENTRAL TABLELANDS WATER EMERGENCY CONNECTION (LS.CO.1)**

(General Manager)

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That Council endorse the joint critical drought initiatives project being delivered by Central Tablelands Water, Cowra Council and Orange City Council consisting of the following components:
  - Component 1 – intake screens at the Cowra raw water intake structure on the Lachlan River. This will allow increased raw water capacity to the Cowra Water Treatment Plant – estimated cost \$350,000;
  - Component 2 – installation of pumps at the Woodstock reservoir to allow transfer of water from the Cowra reticulation network to the CTW network – estimated cost \$807,000; and
  - Component 3 – a 12ML clear water reservoir at the Carcoar Water Treatment Plant (CWTP) to ensure supply continuity for the CTW system – estimated cost \$4,703,000.
2. That Council include funding of up to \$360,000 as its contribution towards the 12 ML clear water tank at the CWTP in the draft 20/21 Operational Plan, funded from the Infrastructure Reserve.

**REPORT**

As Council has been advised previously, in August 2019 the NSW Minister for Water, Property and Housing the Hon Melinda Pavey MP announced \$5.5 million to partner with Orange City Council (OCC) to plan for and deliver critical drought initiatives for their community such as pumping stations to enable the use of the Cowra to Orange pipeline. This funding announcement was part of the NSW government's investment of \$78 million for water initiatives to help drought-affected communities in NSW.

A media release was authorised for release by CTW's Chairman, Cr David Somervaille on 29 August 2019, welcoming the drought emergency funding announcement.

After considerable consultation and collaboration with the NSW government, Cowra Council, OCC and CTW, the scope and business case for the Cowra to CTW Emergency Connection project has been finalised and submitted to NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) – Water, and Infrastructure NSW (INSW) for approval.

The project consists of the three following components:

- Component 1 – intake screen at the Cowra raw water intake structure on the Lachlan River. This will allow increased raw water capacity to the Cowra Water Treatment Plant;
- Component 2 – installation of pumps at the Woodstock reservoir to allow transfer of water from the Cowra reticulation network to the CTW network to supply Canowindra, Cargo, Cudal, Manildra, Eugowra, Gooloogong and Grenfell, and

- Component 3 – a 12 ML clear water tank at the Carcoar Water Treatment Plant to ensure supply continuity to the CTW supply system.

This project will complement the CTW to Orange pipeline project which was commissioned in 2019 and will allow bi-directional transfer of potable water between the three water utilities to assist in meeting critical human water needs.

The aim of the project is to address short and long-term emergency supply risks facing the region by meeting one of the objectives of the Centroc Regional IWCM that seeks to address critical water security through co-ordination between water supply authorities. The short and long-term benefits of this project include:

- In the short-term, CTW will be able to respond to its own emerging water supply emergency to help meet critical human water needs.
- In the long-term, current and future water utilities that are connected to CTW's network through a series of reciprocal emergency water supply agreements will have more resilient water supply systems that will allow the transfer of water during severe droughts from places with a relative abundance of supply, to those experiencing high water restrictions.
- The interconnected system will provide the ability for the bi-directional transfer of emergency supplies in the event of unforeseen supply interruptions.

The project will be delivered by CTW, Cowra Council and OCC for a budget of \$5.86m, of which \$5.5m is to be provided by the NSW government through the Critical Drought Initiative Fund, once the business case is approved by INSW. CTW is responsible for funding up to \$0.36m to allow for any funding shortfall for the clear water tank at CWTP.

A Project Participants Agreement detailing each Council's roles and responsibilities in delivering the project has been developed and will be signed by all three Councils prior to the commencement of the project.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

CTW's financial contribution of up to \$360K for the 12 ML clear water tank at the Carcoar Water Filtration Plant will be considered as part of the 20/21 draft Operational Plan.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil