

Contract let for Clarrie Hall Dam Environmental Impact Statement

EIS process will decide if dam wall will be raised

Council has approved the awarding of a contract to an external consultancy to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed raising of Clarrie Hall Dam.

The near \$900,000 contract was awarded to Eco Logical Australia Pty Ltd.

Member for Tweed Geoff Provest welcomed the decision, saying the preparation of the EIS for the dam was a vital step in ensuring Tweed's future water security.

"We are experiencing one of the worst droughts on record and while the Tweed is in a much better position than many other communities across the state, we are not immune to its impacts," Mr Provest said.

"I congratulate Council in progressing the early stages of the project and am proud the NSW Government has been able to help fund that important work through the Restart NSW Safe and Secure Water Program."

Preparation of the EIS will take between 12 and 18 months, during which the consultants will consider and respond to all issues raised in the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) and the surveys and investigations done to date. The EIS will then be placed on public exhibition and Council will seek submissions from the public and interested parties.

All submissions must be formally considered and responded to in a Response to Submission Report which, in conjunction with the EIS, will go to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for assessment and making a recommendation to the Minister. The Minister, or his delegate, will then decide if the project can go ahead and if so under what conditions.

Before the draft EIS goes on public exhibition for comment early in 2021, Council will engage with the community to assist community members to understand the process and make submissions on the EIS.

During preparation of the EIS, Eco Logical will work with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) to address recommendations made in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) prepared for the project. Addressing the recommendations will include further investigation and assessment of potential archaeological deposits and the development of protocols for the community collection, recording, analysis and long-term management of cultural material. Eco Logical will prepare a final ACHA, including a draft Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the project should the proposal be approved.

Meanwhile, Council will continue with plans to revegetate lands purchased to raise the wall of the dam, relocate telecommunications and electricity assets out of the proposed inundation area and investigate options to pursue carbon neutrality for the project, while finalising planning and land acquisitions. To date, some 85 per cent of the private land required has been purchased or is under contract.

The EIS also will address such questions as whether a small hydro electricity generation plant should be put on the dam and whether trees within the new inundation footprint should be cleared or submerged.

Council is committed to full transparency on this project and all documentation is publicly available at <https://www.yoursaytweed.com.au/RaisingClarrieHall>

- ends -