Wyangala Dam Wall Raising Project
Frequently Asked Questions
FAQs Project Snapshot

1. What is the project?
   WaterNSW has been tasked by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to deliver the Wyangala Wall Raising Project. Raising the Wyangala dam wall and increasing the storage capacity will substantially contribute to improving water security and drought resilience for the Lachlan Valley. The project includes:
   - Raising of the embankment and downstream rockfill to add an additional 650GL of storage
   - Raising the spillway and intake towers of the dam by a nominal 10m

2. What are the benefits?
   Key benefits include:
   - Dam storage capacity will be increased by 53%
   - Initial modelling predicts an additional 21.05GL per annum estimated yield for general security license use
   - A significant improvement in drought resilience, water security, flood attenuation and water reliability for the Lachlan Valley
   - Maximising local opportunities from the construction of the project

3. How much will it cost?
   $650M is the estimated cost. It’s a jointly funded project by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments.

4. How long will this project take?
   Construction is estimated to take approximately four years, depending on the final design. To fill the increased storage capacity will depend on weather patterns at that time.
FAQs Landholder Inundation

1. Will I be inundated from the increased storage level? Is my land going to be flooded?

Inundation mapping is underway, and final reports are expected by September 2020. Once the detailed assessments are completed, which will include one on one consultation and site inspections on properties around the dam and in the upper Lachlan and Abercrombie Valleys, in the coming months we will be able to complete the detailed planning and modelling of inundation impacts from a rise in the storage levels.

While the structure will be raised by a nominal 10m, the new full supply level will not be confirmed until the optimised design solution is identified with final determination of the rise in full supply level to be finalised later in the year.

For instance, the new full supply level could be between 9 - 10m to maximise benefits, improve water security and at the same time take into account impacts upstream, on surrounding properties and local council assets.

Inundation impacts will be advised directly to those public and private landholders and assets owners and are scheduled to take place from late September onwards with later rounds of community information and consultation sessions. Dates and details will be advised closer to the time.

2. What does the acquisition process look like, i.e. how will WaterNSW determine price?

The process will be tailored according to the level of impact, nature of impact on the property and farming enterprise and will be negotiated one-on-one with each landholder following site inspections and initial consultation. WaterNSW will follow the process in the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991. This process will involve independent market appraisals, including support to property owners to undertake their own appraisals to inform the negotiation process. Some properties may need to be fully or partially acquired depending on their location. For some partial acquisitions, different options may be able to be considered. This may involve, for example, where appropriate and where agreed, a lease back to the original owner in the event that land may only be inundated periodically for example. The “free from
inundation” period would need to be of sufficient duration to make a lease back a suitable option (e.g. an inundation occurrence of once every 10 years).

3. **Am I going to be paid out to the equivalent of starting my enterprise in the same capacity somewhere else?**
   This will be considered as part of the valuation and negotiation process depending on level of impact. If relocation is being considered, you may be asked to provide information relating to your existing enterprise to support your claim.

4. **How can early construction begin in October 2022? Shouldn’t our land be acquired before any construction commences?**
   The first phase of the project will be the relocation of the Wyangala Waters Holiday Park to enable establishment of project site facilities and/or construction accommodation at the old holiday park in preparation for construction to start on the dam wall in October 2021. There are a number of approvals and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that needs to be completed prior to the construction of the dam. We will be negotiating and finalising purchases of the required land by project completion with construction expected to take approximately four years.
   WaterNSW recognizes that each property and each owner have different circumstances and, in some instances, reaching an agreed outcome may take time. WaterNSW will endeavor wherever practicable to seek to reach a negotiated outcome within the project timeframes. Compulsory acquisition of land will only occur where necessary.

5. **Can the acquisition process be fast tracked to settle within 6 months?**
   This will depend on the needs, valuations and negotiation process. This process won’t start until later this year (post September) following final confirmation of the design full supply level for the new dam wall. We need to finalise the exact level of impact before we can determine what properties will be fully or partially impacted. Individual site inspections in the coming months are needed to inform this process.

6. **What if I don’t want to sell?**
   We understand that if your property is identified as being fully or partially impacted from the raised water levels that this creates concern and anxiety and WaterNSW acknowledges that acquisition of your property can impact on your family and
enterprise. We commit to working closely with you through this process and to working in accordance with our statutory requirements.

This project has been declared as Critical State Significant Infrastructure. Compulsory acquisition remains a possibility particularly for a project of this level of significance but WaterNSW will only seek approval for compulsory acquisition if absolutely necessary.

7. **How will WaterNSW conduct site inspections during COVID-19?**

   WaterNSW is committed to the health and safety of our people, customers and the communities we work in. We are also committed to providing the services essential to the people of NSW and to the continuation of our new dam projects. Our field-based employees are continuing to operate across the state with careful adherence to new COVID-19 protocols.

   From time-to-time a field-based employee may need to come into contact with community members or visit privately owned properties to carry out essential services, including for the planning of new dams. WaterNSW has developed the following guidelines to ensure the continued safety of our employees and the broader community. Click [here](#) for our COVID-19 guidelines.
FAQs Local Businesses

1. Will this project create jobs locally?
Yes. A key guiding principle for this project is to maximise local employment benefits. As a first step, we are working closely with the local Business Chambers in the Lachlan Valley region and a business registration portal is now available, where local businesses can express interest in providing services and products for the project. At all stages we will be looking at how we maximise the benefits of the project locally.

2. Will you be employing local contractors for the construction phase of the project?
We have established a portal for local businesses to register their interest and these details will be supplied to all project contractors and consultants. For each of our major projects, we are seeking to maximise local benefits and the use of local resources and business. WaterNSW project partners and contractors will, in fact, be selected on the basis of their track record in using local suppliers and maximising local benefits from their projects.
Please note registering your interest does not guarantee employment.

3. We are a local Chamber of Commerce. How can we be involved to support the project?
WaterNSW will work closely with Chambers of Commerce in the delivery of these projects. This will include regular updates to members, information evenings and sharing information and opportunities for local businesses with the projects. Please contact Alice Jarrett via alice.jarrett@waternsw.com.au

4. We are a local employment agency. How can we partner with the project to seek employment opportunities for unemployed locals?
We encourage you to register here on our website www.waternsw.com.au. We have established a portal for local businesses to register their interest and these details will be supplied to all project contractors and consultants for each of our major projects. WaterNSW project partners and contractors will, in fact, be selected based on their track record in using local suppliers and maximising local benefits from their projects.
Please note, registering your interest does not guarantee employment.

5. **I am a local hotel. How can I become involved in the project?**

   We encourage you to [register](#) on our website. We have established a portal for local businesses to [register their interest](#) and these details will be supplied to all project contractors and consultants. For each of our major projects, we are seeking to maximise local benefits and the use of local resources and business. WaterNSW project partners and contractors will, in fact, be selected on the basis of their track record in using local suppliers and maximising local benefits from their projects. Please outline your key services such as whether your hotel provides catering, long term stay, conference rooms, wifi or accommodation for example when you register online.
FAQs Environmental

1. **What are the environmental risks and impacts? How will these be mitigated?**

   Environmental impact assessments are currently underway, and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, with formal public consultation as part of normal planning and development processes, will be undertaken in early-mid 2021.

   While this is a project listed under the *Water Supply (Critical Needs) Act 2019*, it does not preclude it from undertaking environmental, heritage and planning assessment.

   WaterNSW are committed to understanding, reducing and offsetting the environmental impacts of the project.

2. **What impact will there be on medium to large flows that flush the bottom of the system and provide water to wetlands?**

   This will be included into the final modelling and assessments that inform operational approvals of the dam. The EIS is due for completion in mid 2021 and will be open to public comment and feedback. Potential impacts on lower system wetlands will need to be considered in those assessments.

3. **What work will be done on the dam to increase fish passage and fish ways?**

   This will be included in the EIS and approvals process.
FAQs Tourism & Recreation

1. Will tourism and recreation be affected?

WaterNSW is well aware of the significant value the tourism industry and people visiting Wyangala Dam brings to the local economy. There will not be any limitations on accessing the lake during the construction and multiple access points to the lake will be maintained, however there will be restrictions to accessing the actual dam structure (e.g. walking on the dam wall) and downstream of the dam structure when construction commences. Managing community safety associated with the construction will be front of mind at all times.

This project creates an opportunity to maximise benefits to the tourism and recreation needs through the development of new infrastructure in the relocation of the Wyangala Waters Holiday Park as part of the early works for the project.

Community assets will be relocated prior to finishing the dam. Relocation of these assets provides an opportunity to improve amenities for the future. For example:

- Boat ramps to accommodate higher water levels
- Car parks will be relocated/built at a higher level
- Toilet amenities will be relocated and built at a higher level
- Picnic spots will be available at a higher level
- BBQs and other amenities will be relocated / renewed at a higher level
- Existing infrastructure will be maintained wherever possible

We’re currently working very closely with Reflections Holiday Parks and Council about how best to improve the visitor experience for when the dam is completed. We will also be working with local tourism groups and seeking broader community feedback as the project progresses.
FAQs General

1. **Will the dam ever fill?**
   All dams are designed to fill, how long this will take will depend on the rainfall and weather patterns after completion. There are numerous examples of dams being built over the last 50 years that were forecast to take many years to fill but a series of major rainfall events filled them in significantly less time. A key objective of this project is to allow us to capture and hold more water when it does rain to provide improved water availability and security during times of drought and low rainfall.

2. **How will this project be incorporated into the Regional Water Strategies?**
   All of the projects announced by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments will be reflected in Regional Water Strategies and Water Sharing plans as and when these plans are reviewed and updated.

3. **What will be the price increase for water licence holders?**
   That will be determined in the coming years as the project is completed and final costs and funding arrangements settled between the NSW Government and Commonwealth Government and a determination by IPART based on the final design and operating costs.

4. **What community and stakeholder consultation is planned? How can I get involved and stay informed?**
   We had intended to start holding local community information sessions about the project in April 2020. However, given the COVID-19 restrictions on travel and group gatherings, these sessions simply cannot currently go ahead as we had hoped.

   Instead, we will be using other ways to keep you updated and informed. Please keep an eye out for project information in your local newspapers (both print and online), on local radio, on our website, in social media including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and newsletters. Broader research will be undertaken later this year with local communities to gather feedback.

   If you would like to go on our project update list please subscribe [here](mailto:wyangaladamproject@waternsw.com.au) or register your contact details by emailing wyangaladamproject@waternsw.com.au
Also, please join our local Facebook Group page WaterNSW - Wyangala Dam Raising project.

5 What is the short-term water security strategy?

WaterNSW is dealing with drought issues. Please refer to our website www.water.nsw.com.au with all the latest project updates in response to the drought.

6 How does COVID – 19 impact the project schedule?

At this point in time the only impact COVID-19 will have on the project is on our community engagement activities. WaterNSW prides itself on showing up and personally meeting with local communities to discuss our projects. Unfortunately, COVID-19 means we currently cannot adopt our usual approach and instead will provide updates and information through other approaches such as local media, newsletters, online, video and livestream Q&As. Other than this, COVID-19 will not delay the project at this time. To receive project updates, please register your interest here on our website.
FAQs The Lachlan Valley Water Security Study

1. What is the background to the Lachlan Water Security study?

The NSW Government identified the Lachlan Valley in its State Infrastructure Strategy (SIS) as the first of four ‘priority catchments’ for the investment and delivery of critical water infrastructure projects over the next decade.

In support of this program, the NSW Government established the $1 billion Regional Water Security and Supply Fund.

The 2014-15 NSW Budget announced the commencement of scoping studies for improving water security for the Central NSW region as part of the NSW Water Security for Regions program. The Lachlan Valley Water Security project was undertaken by WaterNSW and carried out in two phases.

Phase 1 scoping activities for the Belubula River Dam Investigation were completed in 2014 recommending, as a priority, further investigations into a possible dam in the vicinity of Cranky Rock.

Phase 2 was announced in late 2016 and incorporated a broader investigation, with aims to improve water security within the Lachlan Valley region and to look at all possible options, including further investigations into a possible dam in the vicinity of Cranky Rock.

2. What was included in the broader investigation in Phase 2?

Phase 2 included the following activities:

- Review of all identified options including from Phase 1 to develop a shortlist of options for further assessment
- Detailed environmental and geotechnical field investigations
- Preparation of a preliminary business case including detailed cost benefit analysis
- Stakeholder consultation to inform development of the business case
FAQs Preliminary business case options to improve water security

1. What were the options recommended in the preliminary business case to improve water security?

The Preliminary Business Case identified three projects that delivered in combination will produce the needed step-change in drought security, flood management, and water availability that is needed to support regional communities. These projects were identified after consideration of a broader list of options including build and non-build options. The three projects include:

1. Water transfer pipeline between Lake Rowlands and Carcoar Dams;
2. Lower Lachlan water efficiency options; and
3. Raising of Wyangala Dam.

2. Water transfer pipeline between Lake Rowlands and Carcoar Dams

This project is for the delivery of a pipeline to enable transfer of surplus water from the Central Tablelands Water operated Lake Rowlands Dam (formerly known as Coombing Dam) to the currently under-utilised and larger Carcoar Dam, operated by WaterNSW, allowing for more efficient storage of the available water resource and operational flexibility.

For updates on this project click here.

3. Lower Lachlan water efficiency options

This project includes improved efficiencies in effluent systems and alternative groundwater supply for Stock and Domestic (S&D) supply in Muggabah, Merrimajeel, Merrowie, Booberoi and Willandra Creeks.

This scheme includes pipeline supply from the river, groundwater bores and on-farm infrastructure, reducing transmission losses, replenishment flows and operational surpluses.

4. Raising Wyangala Dam

Raising Wyangala dam was analysed and compared against an option to construct a new dam near Cranky Rock on the Belubula River. Raising Wyangala Dam was found to
be a superior option in terms of cost, hydrological modelling benefits, construction risk, and for environmental reasons.

Particular issues with building a dam at Cranky Rock are its larger cost compared to Wyangala and the risk of inundation of Cliefden Caves, a world-recognised system of underground caves which hold internationally significant fossils unique to Australia.

Raising Wyangala Dam provides the greatest improvement in drought resilience, flood attenuation and water reliability. Raising the dam increases the capacity to capture and hold water in periods of surplus and control the release of amounts at times when water is needed.
FAQs Cranky Rock

1. Why was a dam at Cranky Rock not the preferred option?

   The options listed as part of the SBC were assessed and shortlisted, with their benefits and negative impacts assessed and modelled.

   Raising Wyangala Dam was analysed and compared against an option to construct a new dam near Cranky Rock on the Belubula River and raising Wyangala Dam wall was selected as the preferred option.

   Raising Wyangala was found to be a superior option in terms of cost, hydrological modelling benefits, construction risk, and for sustainability reasons.