



Press Release

Call for Urgent Approval of request for an Environmental Flow to be made available for the Barwon Darling System

Mayor of Bourke Shire Council Councillor Barry Hollman said that the ongoing dry conditions and diminishing water supply along the Barwon Darling River system has heightened the need for environment flow in the river to ensure the environmental health of the river and the health and well-being of the communities along the river.

Councillor Hollman said that he was aware of the need for both the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder's (CEWH) Office and the various state agencies involved in the coordination of any flow to undertake a risk assessment associated with the flow and the potential impact on the fish population and the problems associated with potential water losses across a dry river bed and the tributaries leading from the storage to the Barwon Darling System. However, he highlighted that the potential impact on both habitat and fish population if no flow was made available and that this needed to be considered along with the social and economic impact on those communities and properties along the river system.

Councillor Hollman said that the General Manager of Bourke Shire Ross Earl had been in regular contact with the CEWH Office in relation to the possibility of a flow and understood that the CEWH had also been in detailed discussions with all state agencies involved in making any environmental flow available to consider the risks and how they might be managed.

General Manager Ross Earl said that the rainfall over the past ten days and that predicted over the coming week in the upper reaches of the catchment and linking the river system

to the storages may assist in providing a much wetter river and assist in reducing potential losses.

Mr Earl said he was confident that an environmental flow was actively being considered and the timing of the flow both from the perspective of environmental benefit and risk mitigation was important. However, he highlighted that the river at Bourke has not flowed across the weir for well over 200 days and the availability of water was reducing rapidly which will not only put pressure on town supplies but also the supply for those persons along the river system for whom the river is their sole source of water supply for both stock and domestic purposes.

The lack of water has to have a negative impact of the fish population

Councillor Hollman acknowledged the need for a cooperative approach by both State and Federal agencies to make a flow a reality and was confident that this cooperation would be forthcoming as it was during the Northern Connectivity Event in April 2018.

He added the time for action is becoming increasingly urgent and noted that any flow that became available would take at least six (6) weeks to reach Bourke if there was sufficient water available.

END

Contacts

Media contacts General Manager of Bourke Ross Earl 0409362307 or Mayor Councillor Barry Hollman

