

(As lodged on the Project's website: <http://cvchrws.gov.com.au>)

Clarence Valley & Coffs Harbour Regional Water Supply Project
A BRIEF UPDATE ON PROJECT PROGRESS
& AN OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT BACKGROUND
as at 14th August 2007



Photo: Trackdrill working at the spillway site, Shannon Ck Storage 11/7/07

SHANNON CREEK STORAGE CONSTRUCTION
IS UNDERWAY – COMMUNITY TOURS, departing from
South Grafton, ARE PROVIDED BY
NORTH COAST WATER EACH SECOND SATURDAY
MORNING – BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL – to book
your seat on the free bus PHONE 66450077

CONSTRUCTION OF SHANNON CREEK STORAGE, ACCESS ROAD & POWER SUPPLY (Contract No. 0402231):

Following approvals by the Clarence Valley Council (CVC) and NSW Dept of Energy Utilities and Sustainability, the contract for construction of the Shannon Creek Storage and Associated Works was awarded by CVC to Leighton Contractors Pty Limited on 21st June 2006.

The contractors commenced the storage access road construction works in August 2006. **Following completion of the bitumen sealed access road into the storage site in March 2007, Leighton's site office is now operating at Shannon Creek (PHONE TOLLFREE 1800 258 885).** NCW/Dept of Commerce's project management office is now also based at the Shannon Creek site (Phone 66433999).

From South Grafton, access to the site is via Armidale Road-Geregarow Road-Shannondale Road and all persons entering the construction site must report to the Leightons site office on arrival. Strict induction procedures apply to persons authorised to proceed further into the construction site.

Details regarding construction underway are available on this website (follow the link "Shannon Creek Storage Construction by Leighton Contractors", on the website homepage)

The storage construction is scheduled for completion by the end of 2008, completing the final component of the \$180M Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour Regional Water Supply Project. The project is funded by the Clarence Valley Council, Coffs Harbour City Council and NSW State Government.

PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

TENDERS FOR SHANNON CREEK STORAGE & ASSOCIATED WORKS:

- In May 2005 Expressions of Interest (EoI) for the **construction of the Shannon Creek Storage, access road and power supply** were sought by the Department of Commerce, project managers for North Coast Water. Eols closed on 12th July 2005 and following assessment of the Eols, four contractors prequalified to participate in the tender process (later reduced to three contractors – AbiGroup; BMD & Leighton).
- **Tenders for the GC21 Contract (Contract No. 0402231)** were formally invited by the Department of Commerce on 6th February 2006 and closed on Tuesday 4th April 2006. Following assessment of tenders, a recommendation was made by North Coast Water to Clarence Valley Council, regarding acceptance of the tender submitted by Leighton.
- Some minor works proceeded ahead of the award of the storage contract.
- The contract was officially awarded to Leighton Contractors Pty Limited on 21st June 2006.

STATE & FEDERAL APPROVALS FOR THE CV&CH RWS PROJECT:

- ◆ **New Access Road Development Application to Clarence Valley Council (access from Shannondale Road into the Shannon Creek Storage site):**
 - DEC conditional concurrence for the development was received on 4 October 2005. The access road DA was considered by the Clarence Valley Council (CVC) Environment and Planning Committee on 15 November 2005 and the Committee endorsed the recommendation to CVC to give conditional consent to the DA, with delegated authority given to the General Manager if necessary pending availability of an approved Koala Plan of Management.
 - CVC considered the recommendation at its meeting on 22 November 2005 and resolved to support the Committee's recommendation.
 - The Koala Plan of Management was approved by the Dept of Natural Resources on 30 November 2005.
 - **Under delegated authority the CVC General Manager gave consent to the DA on 30 November 2005 after receipt of the Dept Natural Resources approval of the Koala Plan of Management.**
- ◆ **Species Impact Statements, and Review of Environmental Factors for Design Modifications:**
 - **At the 22 November 2005 CVC meeting, and after DEC Concurrence on 4 October 2005, Council adopted its Committee recommendations following consideration of environmental impact assessment documents - specifically Reviews of Environmental Factors and Species Impact Statements which were prepared and exhibited in respect of various proposed activities in relation to the completion of the regional water supply project. Council determined that NCW may proceed to carry out the following elements of the CV&CH RWS Project:**
 - **storage design changes as identified in the REF for the design modifications (Nov 2004)**
 - **electricity power line supply as identified in the SEE and REF (Nov 2004)**
 - **upgrading of Shannondale and Geregaw Roads as identified in the 1999 EIS & later review of ecological impacts (Nov 2004)**
 - **the balance of the storage, associated infrastructure and pipeline construction as approved by LCCC on 22 March 2000.**
- ◆ **Power Substation at Blaxland Creek (to service the Shannon Creek Storage):**
 - **At the 22 February 2005 meeting of Clarence Valley Council, conditional consent was granted to the power substation Development Application under Part 4 of the EP&A Act.**
- ◆ **Powerlines/Existing Access Road Upgrade/Storage Modifications:**
 - **DEC conditional concurrence for these Part 5 activities was received on 4 October 2005.**

- CVC Environment & Planning Committee, on 15th November 2005, endorsed a recommendation to CVC to approve the work proceeding.
- **CVC on 22 November 2005 resolved to support the recommendation from the CVC Environment & Planning Committee.**

◆ **Referral to C/Wth Department of Environment & Heritage – Referral No. 2005/2191:**

- On 27 June 2005 NCW submitted a Referral Application to DEH Canberra (now DEWR), regarding the Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour Regional Water Supply Project. DEH subsequently advised that the Referral (EPBC Reference Number 2005/2191) had been considered under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 Act and that the action was a “controlled action”.
- The Referral documentation was placed on public display at CVC Grafton office, DEC Coffs Harbour office, and DEH Parkes ACT office and submissions closed on 19th September 2005.
- **On 11th January 2006 DEH advised North Coast of the decision to approve the taking of the action covered by Referral 2005/2191, with attached conditions.**

✚ **FINALISATION OF A COMPENSATORY HABITAT PACKAGE:**

- A condition of concurrence included the agreement between Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC – now known as DECC) and CVC to a Compensatory Habitat Package before Stage 2 construction works could commence.
- A Memorandum of Understanding with DEC was signed off by the Director of North East Division of Environment Protection & Regulation DEC and the General Manager of CVC in late January 2006.
- The package provides for protection and conservation of habitat on 1125 ha of land to the east of the Shannon Creek storage and adjoining the Chambigne Nature Reserve. **A Management Plan and Voluntary Conservation Agreement between DECC and CVC are in the final stage of completion.**

✚ **MINISTERIAL REVIEW OF CV&CH RWS PROJECT**

Following receipt of ongoing community representations on the CV&CH RWS Project and changes to the Country Towns Water Supply & Sewerage Program, the Minister for Energy & Utilities Frank Sartor MP ordered a review of the Project in October 2004.

The terms of reference of the review team were to review the need for the project, the project planning processes, and to identify any potential improvements that might be initiated by North Coast Water. The review team consisting of senior management from Hunter Water Australia and NSW State Water visited the project on 11-12 Oct 2004 and their report was supplied to North Coast Water.

In broad terms the review team considered “*that the remaining components of the Strategy (ie Shannon Creek Storage, linking pipeline, powerline and access road) should proceed in accordance with the established best practice planning principles and delivery practises*”.

The review team also commended the North Coast Water’s efforts to consult with the community and for its priority in implementing the Regional Water Efficiency Program.

The Review found no need to initiate further assessment or actions outside those managed by the project team to address remaining key challenges. Mediation with an interested group has been pursued, as recommended by the Review.

The report noted that the project will continue to be of interest to a range of stakeholders and considered “*the statutory approvals process is consistent and adequate to address issues relating to the project*”.

The report by the review team is titled "Strategic Review into the Regional Water Supply Strategy incorporating Shannon Creek Storage". Copies have been supplied to public libraries in Grafton, Maclean and Coffs Harbour.

NORTH COAST WATER (NCW) NOW A BUSINESS UNIT OF CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL (CVC):

Following the amalgamation of six local councils in the Clarence Valley on 25/2/04, North Coast Water is operating as a business unit of the new council, Clarence Valley Council. The Clarence Valley & Coffs Harbour Regional Water Supply Project continues to be administered by Clarence Valley Council/North Coast Water, through the Project Office now based at the Shannon Creek Storage site west of Coutts Crossing.

CV&CH RWS PROJECT'S DISTRIBUTION PIPELINES - CONSTRUCTION:

Construction of the Project's Stage 1A pipeline – "Karangi pipeline" (62.5km of 600mm diameter pipeline from the "CrossOver" near Coutts Crossing to Karangi Dam at Coffs Harbour) and the Glenreagh booster pump station, was completed in December 2002 after a six month construction period. The pipeline was accelerated as a drought management measure to assist in securing the water supplies of both the Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour, prior to construction of Shannon Creek Storage. Water from the Nymboida River can now be stored in Karangi Dam at Coffs Harbour, along with water from the Orara River, when river flows permit (in accordance with licence conditions issued by Dept Infrastructure, Planning & Natural Resources).

The Karangi pipeline has enabled some increase in the security of the Clarence Valley's water supply prior to construction of Shannon Creek Storage. In June 2004, whilst the pipeline from Nymboida River supplying the Clarence Valley was out of operation to allow upgrading of the Nymboida pipeline crossing at Blaxland Creek, the Karangi pipeline was utilised to bring water by gravity from Karangi Dam to Rushforth Road Reservoir at South Grafton.

Construction of Stage 1B pipeline (Sections 1,2,4 &5) – pipeline duplication from Nymboida towards Rushforth Road Reservoir, was undertaken by EcoCivil Pty Ltd and completed in July 2004. At the request of North Coast Water, arrangements were put in place for EcoCivil to return at a later date to construct Section 3 of the pipeline (from the 'CrossOver' into the Shannon Creek Storage site), following approval of the storage access road route.

EcoCivil has since returned to site and the Section 3 pipeline construction was completed in August 2006.

SHANNON CREEK STORAGE – ACCESS ROAD ROUTE:

A Development Application for the section of new access road from Shannondale Road into the storage site (4.5km) was originally submitted to Pristine Waters Council (PWC) on 16th June 2003. Following consideration of submissions made to PWC, stakeholder consultation workshops were held in November and December 2003, additional ecological studies undertaken and further alternative routes have been investigated by North Coast Water.

A new Development Application (for a 4.4km modified route off Shannondale Road) was submitted to Clarence Valley Council in July 2004 (Pristine Waters Council was one of the six councils amalgamated in February 2004 to form the Clarence Valley Council - CVC). The access road DA was on public exhibition from 20th August to 20th September 2004, **and again from 12th May to 14th June 2005 (with the Project's SISs and supporting assessments).**

After consideration of submissions and reports by consultants engaged by CVC, the Council at its meeting on 23rd February 2005 delegated authority to the Acting General Manager to determine the DA following consideration of submissions to the Koala Plan of Management (KPoM).

The KPoM public exhibition closed on 28th February 2005 and submissions were considered by Clarence Valley Council. CVC General Manager gave consent to the DA, under delegated authority, on 30 November 2005 after receipt of the Dept Natural Resources approval of the Koala Plan of Management.

The access road construction also included the upgrading of the existing Geregarrow Road (4.8 km) and Shannondale Road (4.1 km) to a sealed two-lane rural road standard, as well as new bridgework at Koukandowie Creek.

The access road and power supply to the Shannon Creek Storage are included as Design Development & Construction (DD&C) elements of the construction contract for Shannon Creek Storage and Associated Works (Contract No. 0402231 let to Leighton Contractors on 21st June 2006).

PROJECT PROGRAM:

Vegetation Clearing – Shannon Creek Storage:

Expressions of Interest for the clearing of vegetation in the Shannon Creek Storage inundation area and access road route closed in February 2003. One organisation (Vemco Pty Ltd) met the quality requirements for shortlisting.

With Project approvals in hand **a contract was let to Vemco Pty Ltd for the vegetation clearing along the access road route to the storage site - clearing activities on the access road route were completed in June 2006. The contractors returned in September 2006 to undertake further clearing activities for Leighton Contractors Pty Limited. Clearing other than riparian vegetation has now been completed and millable timber has been salvaged from the site.**

Construction of Shannon Creek Storage, access road and power supply:

- Construction of the power supply, access road and Shannon Creek Storage (Contract No. 0402231)

- This major contract is being project managed by NSW Dept of Commerce on behalf of North Coast Water (a business unit of Clarence Valley Council).

- Leighton Contractors survey and geotechnical activities associated with the construction under Contract No. 0402231 commenced on site in July 2006. Following completion of the bitumen sealed access road into the storage site in late March 2007, Leighton's site office was relocated from its temporary location at 60 Geregarrow Rd, Coutts Crossing, to a compound at Shannon Creek (PHONE TOLLFREE 1800 258 885). NCW/Dept of Commerce's project management office is now also based at the Shannon Creek site (Phone 66433999).

Completion of the storage construction by Leighton Contractors is scheduled for late 2008.

Further details are available on this website ([follow link "Shannon Creek Storage Construction by Leighton Contractors"](#), on this website homepage)

SHANNON CREEK STORAGE:

How we have planned for the future – water storage capacity:

On 7th August 2002 North Coast Water decided to include in the design of Shannon Creek Storage, provisions to cater for a possible raising to 75,000 megalitre capacity if required in the future. This is somewhat less than the upper limit of 90,000 megalitres nominated in the project Environmental Impact Statement. Provision for possible future raising to 75,000ML capacity is included in the current detailed design of the storage, and an **embankment to hold 30,000ML (capable of being raised to 75,000ML capacity in future) is to be constructed in accordance with the approved project.**

The decision to build the 30,000ML storage and include embankment foundations suitable for future raising if necessary, leaves future options open - North Coast Water is allowing the next generation to decide if raising of the dam is the most appropriate and economical way to address their water needs. At that time, if this option is chosen, an environmental impact assessment will no doubt be required.

Land Acquired:

North Coast Water purchased a number of private properties and crown road reserves in the Shannon Creek area (approx 4700 ha), with certain areas to be used for water storage, buffer

zone and other conservation purposes associated with the Project and best practice water supply.

Environmental Management Plans:

Management Plans are progressively being implemented and updated by North Coast Water - for Cultural Heritage, Compensatory Habitat, Threatened Species, Vertebrate Pests, Weeds and Fire management at Shannon Creek and for restoration of certain riparian and terrestrial vegetation downstream of the storage embankment.

DROUGHT MANAGEMENT – WATER SUPPLY:

The 2002-03 drought conditions experienced in the Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour region highlighted the need for the early completion of all components of the regional project, including the Shannon Creek Storage.

The regional scheme including the 30,000ML Shannon Creek Storage, will provide the solution to the water supply security problems being experienced in the Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour region. Currently the Clarence Valley has no large water storage facility and is dependent on regularly drawing from the Nymboida River to meet consumers' needs.

With the regional population expected to more than double in the next 50 years, from 95,000 to approximately 220,000 persons, North Coast Water is attempting to carefully balance the water needs of consumers and the environment. Construction of the Shannon Creek Storage and transfer pipelines will not only provide water storage security, but will also allow an increased level of river protection to be implemented on the Orara and Nymboida Rivers.

PROJECT COST:

- the Stage 2 construction works (including Shannon Creek Storage, access road and power supply) will cost around \$90 million, from a total Project cost of approx \$180 million.
- The Project is funded by Local Government (Clarence Valley Council and Coffs Harbour City Council) and the NSW State Government (through the Dept of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability).

TERRESTRIAL ECOLOGICAL MONITORING:

With the agreement of all involved parties, North Coast Water has transferred from Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd (ERM) to Cumberland Ecology Pty Ltd, the engagement for undertaking an extensive long term terrestrial ecological monitoring program (costing in excess of \$2.0M).

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (EMP):

The details of the four main strategies under the EMP are progressively being developed in parallel with the Construction Operation Impact Management Strategies for both the pipeline and storage construction contracts. **Progress on development of the four strategies of the EMP is outlined in the Project's website**, under "Environmental Management" see links to "Environmental Management Plan – EMP Progress Chart" and "Environmental Management Plan – HMP Progress Chart".

RIVER MONITORING:

A condition of the Regional Water Supply Project proceeding was the development of a Riverine Management Strategy, which includes a river monitoring program.

A specialist Technical Advisory Panel completed a peer review on design of the Project's river monitoring program for rivers including the Nymboida, Orara, and Blaxland Rivers and Shannon Creek. **NCW is currently jointly sponsoring two PhD students working on further developing the long term monitoring program, as proposed by the Technical Advisory Panel.**

A River Monitoring Committee has been established, including community, council and state government agency representatives. The Committee is chaired by NCW's Manager of Engineering Services.

REGIONAL WATER EFFICIENCY STRATEGY / DROUGHT MANAGEMENT

The Regional Water Efficiency Program for the Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour was launched on 12 February 2002 and is now being implemented under the leadership of North Coast Water, with the co-operation and assistance of Clarence Valley Council and Coffs Harbour City Council.

Consumers are being urged to continue to be mindful of the need to be efficient in their water use – to save water, save money, and save the environment. North Coast Water and Coffs Harbour Water are continuing to monitor water consumption, and river flows in the Nymboida and Orara Rivers.

Details of water restrictions policies and current levels of restrictions are available from Coffs Harbour City Council and North Coast Water/Clarence Valley Council.

TOTAL WATER SUPPLY OPERATING PLAN (TWSOP):

Development of the framework of an Operating Plan is underway. The content of the TWSOP is being developed by the respective design consultants and will be expanded by the contractors during the construction phase of the Project.

COPMANHURST WATER SUPPLY:

The 19.5km pipeline linking Mountain View (near Grafton) to Copmanhurst Village, and a pumping station at Mountain View, was opened on 24th May 2002 and North Coast Water has since been providing Copmanhurst village and landowners along the pipeline route with a more secure water supply.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

General interest media releases are supplied to local media prior to commencement of, or at the completion of, key elements of the Project. *See publications included on this website, under "Newsletters & Flyers".*

Liaison has been undertaken with key stakeholders and specifically with directly affected landowners at the Shannon Creek Storage site and along the Project's pipeline routes.

Community input has been provided to the Project through community representatives actively participating in various Committees, including the Project's Water Efficiency Team, River Monitoring Committee, Aboriginal Liaison Committee and via the Public Access Sessions at Project Committee meetings.

ADDITIONAL INFO AVAILABLE ON THIS WEBSITE!

Media releases issued by the Clarence Valley & Coffs Harbour Regional Water Supply Project are available on the website – check out the releases under the link "**Project Media Releases**" listed on the home page. **Photographs** are available under links on the homepage of this website, and a map outlining the Project components is available under "**Maps**". *Links to other relevant websites are also provided at the base of the home page on this website.*
