



Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham

Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate
Senator for South Australia

24 October 2019

The Hon. Michael McCormack MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Re: Gawler River Northern Floodway Proposal

Dear Minister

I write on behalf of the Gawler Floodplain Management Authority (GRFMA) regarding funding for the Northern Floodway project.

The GRFMA approached me in June regarding flood mitigation works for the Gawler River Northern Floodway proposal. Flood Mitigation works are required to provide flood protection for flood events which have occurred on average every 10 years over the past 160 years, with the last experienced in October 2016. The 2016 flood event inundated approximately 1500 hectares of horticultural land, affecting 300 primary producers and resulted in an estimated \$51 million in damages, not to mention a significant rise in the cost of fruit and vegetables for consumers.

The flood mitigation works proposed incorporated levee improvements and ongoing maintenance, river channel works, a new levee and a floodway system downstream of Old Port Wakefield Road. These works are required to provide flood protection to over 250 properties (many of which are high value horticultural properties), the Virginia Township and rezoned residential areas within the Virginia growth precinct, Port Wakefield and Angle Vale Roads and revegetation of the surrounding Gawler River channel system.

The total initial estimated cost of the project is \$27 million, with the first stage of preliminary works costing \$2 million. The GRFMA were hoping to receive \$900,000 each from the South Australian and Federal Government with in-kind contributions from the GRFMA being provided at a cost of \$200,000.

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Attached is a report by Tonkin Consulting which outlines the proposed project works in detail for your information.

I initially approached Minister Littleproud after meeting with the GRFMA back in June. Minister Littleproud responded to my letter encouraging the GRFMA to apply for funding through the Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF).

The GRFMA applied for \$900,000 in funding through the BBRF but their application wasn't successful. It appears the sticking point was the \$900,000 to be provided by the South Australian Government. The GRFMA had approached the South Australian Government for \$900,000 in funding to match the contribution they were hoping to receive via the BBRF. As part of their application to the BBRF, the GRFMA provided the attached letter from the South Australian Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon David Speirs MP, encouraging them to apply for funding through the South Australian Stormwater Management Authority (SMA) with the Minister stating that he believed their application would receive favourable consideration given the area concerned is a priority flood risk area in South Australia. I am advised that the BBRF were not prepared to fund the proposed works because the monies from the South Australian Government had not yet been guaranteed.

As already stated, the proposed works are required to provide flood protection for major flooding events which have occurred every 10 years over the past 160 years. With the last event occurring in 2016 it is likely that another flooding event will occur in the near future.

I believe this important project is worthy of favourable consideration especially in light of estimated flood damage calculations and the impact any flood event would have on the residential and horticultural growth of areas of Gawler, Angle Vale, Virginia and Two Wells.

I would be grateful for any advice as to whether an alternative avenue for funding the GRFMA's proposal can be found and thank you in advance for your consideration of this important matter.

Yours sincerely



Simon Birmingham