



CENTRAL DARLING SHIRE COUNCIL

2 August 2024

Council Administrator thanks Minister for action and commitment

Central Darling Shire Council Administrator, Bob Stewart, has thanked the NSW Water Minister, Rose Jackson for her recent visit to Wilcannia and action investigating the situation with the Weir redesign. It's still early days but the progress is very positive.

This week the Minister produced an open letter to the community of Wilcannia with an explanation on where things are up to. The Minister has paused any further work on the design and environmental planning assessment of the new weir. She has also requested an independent review into the environmental impacts, safety and operational concerns that led to the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) proposing a new design for the weir.

The Wilcannia Weir project is being undertaken by the NSW government. It is funded by the Australian and State Governments.

Some two years ago the Wilcannia community endorsed a design for the weir. This is a project which has been talked about and required since the 1970s. Central Darling Shire Council and the community have rejected the proposed redesign because it will have a significant impact to the community.

In June Minister Jackson visited Wilcannia and met with community members, organisations and Council. The Minister heard first-hand about the issues, concerns and anxiety being caused because of the project redesign. Concerns include the reduced weir height which means it will not guarantee long term water security and residents' connection to the river.

Mr Stewart said it has taken over 40 years to get to this stage and the community want to be assured that what is built is culturally appropriate and will stand the test of time.

"The weir redesign has seen the people of Wilcannia come together in strong opposition and lobby to have the decision overturned. We're not there yet, but we are seeing progress in the right direction. I Congratulate all the community for working together," Mr Stewart said.

The Minister says it will take several months to complete the review. Members of the Wilcannia community will be involved in the review with more details to come. While the weir design work will be paused and the review completed, work will continue on the Wilcannia water treatment plant upgrade, Community River Place codesign, and investigating a potential new groundwater bore. The Government department is looking at a location, in an old branch of the river, which appears to be less saline.

"I welcome the independent review and look forward to working with reviewer," Mr Stewart said.

Ends

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