

Rose Jackson

Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness,
Minister for Water, Minister for Mental Health,
Minister for Youth and Minister for the North Coast

**Media Release****Wilcannia Weir Independent Review panel members announced**

Monday, 14 October 2024

****Photos of panel members [here](#)****

Panel members have now been appointed to lead the independent review into the Wilcannia Weir Replacement Project, marking a significant step forward in the review process.

It comes following the NSW Government's commitment to undertake a review of the Wilcannia proposed weir design.

The panel will look into the environmental impacts, safety and operational concerns that led the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environmental and Water (DCCEEW) to put forward a new design as part of the environmental impact assessment for this project.

The review will consider the community's concerns about the change.

The Independent Review Panel members include:

- Panel Chair, Geoff Wise – Chairman of the Western Lands Advisory Council
- James McTavish – former NSW Cross-Border Commissioner and Regional Town Water Supply Coordinator
- Professor Stuart Khan – member of the NSW Independent Water Advisory Panel
- A representative from the Murray Darling Basin Authority, as a panel observer

Mr Wise and Mr McTavish have extensive experience in community engagement and are well known to the Wilcannia community.

Professor Khan will provide technical advice and support, while a representative from the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) will act in an observer role.

The panel will focus on ensuring the review process is transparent and considers the views of key stakeholders, including the broader community.

It comes after the Department revised the weir design in 2023 following feedback from agencies and stakeholders during the public exhibition of the Environmental Impact Statement in 2022.

Widespread community concern over the change prompted NSW Minister for Water Rose Jackson to pause work on the project and to establish an independent review into the reasons for the new design in June this year.

With panel members now appointed, the review will commence in the coming weeks and is expected to take several months to complete.

The panel members plan to be in Wilcannia on 11 November and are keen to hear from the community. Further details will be provided closer to the date.

Once finalised, the findings will be made available to the public.

Quotes attributable to NSW Minister for Water, Rose Jackson:

“I have heard the community’s deeply held concerns and disappointment loud and clear. I know Wilcannia feels a promise has been broken, and that’s why I’m backing the pledge I made to support an independent review that will investigate the decisions behind the new proposed weir design.

“Today, I’m pleased to announce the panel members, who were carefully chosen following recommendations from the community and will help ensure the review has the right balance of expertise and people known and trusted by locals.

“This is the safest way to guarantee the review findings are unbiased and the investigation is carried out transparently and in the best interest of the Wilcannia community, because at the end of the day, that’s what this project is all about – improving water security for Wilcannia.

“It’s important the panel has the time to get the job done properly, but once the review is complete, we hope to find a way to progress the project and replace the current infrastructure that’s long been causing community frustration and exposing the town to water security issues.”

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