

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Finocchiaro to Minister for Renewables, Energy and Essential Services:

Consideration of Additional Dams and Water Supply Options

1. What hydrological assessments, mapping, surveying or costing has been done on the proposed Warrai Dam project?

The most contemporary broad study into dam options in the Darwin region was undertaken by the CSIRO, and documented in a series of technical reports under the banner of the North Australia Water Resource Assessment (NAWRA). The study considered the Warrai dam, the Marrakai dam and the Mt Bennet dam projects and the assessment included:

- evaluation of the soil and water resources;
- identification and evaluation of water capture and storage options;
- identification and testing the commercial viability of irrigated agriculture opportunities; and
- an assessment of potential environmental, social and economic impacts and risks of water resource and irrigation development.

2. Can you please provide a copy of any documents mentioned in response to question (1) above?

The NAWRA technical reports, which specifically assessed and reported on the Warrai Dam, the Marrakai dam and the Mt Bennet dam projects, are publically available via <https://www.csiro.au/en/Research/Major-initiatives/Northern-Australia/Current-work/NAWRA>

Much of the detailed work previously undertaken since the 1970s, including hydrological assessments, mapping, surveying and costing, is available via the Northern Territory Government's online resource hub, Territory Stories, at <https://www.territorystories.nt.gov.au/>.

3. What planning work has been done on the Warrai Dam project since 2013 and, if any, can you please provide a copy of that work?

No further planning work has been undertaken on the Warrai Dam project since 2013.

The 2013 Darwin Water Supply Strategy (a publicly available document) investigated a number of future water sources for the Darwin region, including the Warrai Dam project. As a result of that investigation, further planning for that project was not undertaken for the following reasons:

- The option involves an in-stream dam, with significant associated environmental impacts including the inability to meet the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' requirements for maintaining environmental flows.
- The option was the highest cost of the short listed options, in part due to its location a further 45 kilometres more to the location of demand than the preferred AROWS project.
- The option would impact on a significant number of Aboriginal sacred sites, both in the area of the dam, and in the inundation area, and at least one Aboriginal group with connections to the land was strongly opposed to its development.
- Given the environmental and indigenous issues, the option was judged to carry a significant risk of community concern.

4. What hydrological assessments, mapping, surveying or costing has been done on the proposed Murrakai Dam project?

Please refer to the response to question 1 above.

5. Can you please provide a copy of any documents mentioned in response to question (4) above?

Please refer to the response to question 2 above.

6. What hydrological assessments, mapping, surveying or costing has been done on the proposed Mt Bennett Dam project?

Please refer to the response to question 1 above.

7. Can you please provide a copy of any documents mentioned in response to question (6) above?

Please refer to the response to question 2 above.