

REMOVAL OF MANYWEATHERS WEIR, CASINO

March 2009

Why is Manyweathers Weir being removed?

The Weir was originally constructed to supplement Casino's town water supply. However, town water is now sourced from Jabour Weir, meaning Manyweathers Weir no longer serves its original purpose. In addition, necessary repair and ongoing maintenance is required at the weir at a cost of more than \$100,000, with such works also potentially requiring the installation of fish passage at an estimated cost of \$360,000.



Who owns the weir?

State Water Corporation owns the weir. State Water is a state-owned corporation that regulates and delivers water along rivers throughout rural and regional NSW. State Water manages weirs and dams around the state and aims to ensure its assets operate efficiently and cost-effectively.

When will the weir be removed?

At this stage, works are anticipated to begin in late Autumn 2009. Mitigation measures will be implemented to reduce the local impacts associated with traffic access, noise, water quality, waste management and public safety.

Will I still be able to swim, fish and canoe in the water?

Yes. Surveys of the river bed show that multiple pools of up to four metres deep will still exist upstream after the weir has been removed, meaning use of the river for swimming, fishing and canoeing can continue.

How will removing the weir impact the environment?

Removing the weir will improve biological productivity, restore fish passage and improve natural flow conditions. The weir is a barrier to the highest priority fish passage on the Richmond River, with weir removal improving fish access to over 1000 km of upstream habitat. Weir removal will potentially impact platypus distribution within the weir pool but is unlikely to seriously impact population levels in the wider Casino area, particularly downstream of the weir (Grant 2008).

Has State Water considered alternatives?

Alternative options have been investigated, including allocating funds to restore and maintain the weir and provide fish passage. The cost to do this however was prohibitive. State Water also offered to transfer ownership of the weir to Richmond Valley Council, although the offer was declined. This is understandable given that repair and maintenance liability plus the issue of providing fish passage would also be transferred to Council.

Who approved removal of the weir?

State Water investigated the necessary legislative requirements for weir removal. Consultation and/or approval has been sought from Richmond Valley Council, Department of Primary Industries, Department of Water and Energy, Department of Environment and Climate Change, and the Department of Lands.

What about the historical significance of Manyweathers?

Investigations were conducted into the historical significance of the weir and found the heritage values of the structure did not outweigh reasons for removal. State Water recognizes the local historic significance of the weir since it was constructed as one of the Jack Beale Weirs Drought Relief Program, and is named after Casino's longest serving Mayor, Richmond Manyweathers. Taking this into consideration, State Water will consult with local groups to further explore options to recognise the historical importance of this section of the Richmond River.

How can I make comment on the weir removal?

Further consultation on how to preserve the memory of the weir will occur to enable local community concerns to be identified and considered.

For further information, please contact:

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