

8. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Community consultation is an important element of the floodplain risk management process facilitating community engagement and ultimate acceptance of the overall project.

8.1. Post-2012 Flood SES Questionnaire

The NSW State Emergency Service (SES) issued a questionnaire following the March 2012 floods in south west NSW. While chiefly intended to collect flood data to update flood intelligence (e.g. Local Flood Plans) and to inform Flood Studies, the questionnaire also included questions about temporary protection (sandbagging), evacuation responses and alternative accommodation, which are useful for the current study. Some respondents also used the opportunity to include unsolicited information on the effectiveness of the March 2012 flood operation. Approximately 150 responses were received from within the study area. These have been reviewed as part of the current study.

8.2. Post-2012 Oral History Project

In the months following the March 2012 flood, Wagga Wagga City Library and State Library of NSW sponsored the recording of 25 interviews for an oral history project. The interviews include perspectives from WWCC, SES and affected communities especially North Wagga. Insights from these interviews have been drawn upon for this work.

8.3. Flood Futures Program

Council conducted extensive consultation in 2015 around proposals to raise the main city (CBD) and North Wagga levees, the former to provide protection to the 1% AEP flood, and the latter to provide protection to the 5% AEP flood. This consultation is summarised in documents available at <http://yoursaywagga.com.au/floodfutures/documents>, and has been considered as part of the current study.

8.4. Floodplain Risk Management Advisory Committee

The Wagga Wagga FRMAC comprises a number of representatives from the local community, including residents, members of Council, OEH and Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) representatives and the SES.

8.5. Stakeholder Engagement

Consultation with key stakeholders is an important element of the floodplain risk management process ultimately facilitating community engagement and acceptance of the overall project. Engagement with key stakeholders from the early stages (August and September 2016) of the current study has been undertaken for the following community groups and government agencies:

- Oura Progress Association
- Gumly Gumly community representative
- Wagga Floodplain Residents Protection Association
- North Wagga Residents Association
- WWCC – current and former personnel
- SES – current and former personnel
- Bureau of Meteorology

Consultation included phone conversations, emails and one-on-one meetings with the relevant groups. A summary of this initial consultation is presented in Appendix B. The key findings of consultation within the various community groups are:

- *That floodplain management and the current study need to be undertaken in an equitable fashion which benefits people living in areas both protected and not protected by the levees. Various floodplain communities acknowledge the benefits of raising the CBD levee, however think that raising the North Wagga levee is inequitable by placing more value on the North Wagga community than other communities on the floodplain.*
- *That a long-term strategic plan be implemented to reduce damages associated with flooding at Wagga by allowing future development in areas away from the floodplain and encouraging current floodplain developments to leave the floodplain.*
- *That Community perception is that the flood model is incorrect. More work is required to build confidence in the flood model results to appease community perception.*
- *Community consultation and engagement is paramount for the success and acceptance of the current Floodplain Risk Management Study.*

In addition to the above listed key stakeholders, consultation with the following stakeholders and agencies has also been undertaken:

- Council's Planners and Engineers;
- Office of Environment and Heritage;
- NSW State Emergency Service;
- Bureau of Meteorology;
- Murray-Darling Basin Authority;
- Department of Primary Industries;
- Local Land Services;
- Essential Energy;
- Riverina Water County Council;
- Department of Primary Industries;
- Roads and Maritime Services; and
- Australian Rail Track Corporation.

These stakeholders and agencies have been contacted for input into the current study. Where applicable, the provided information has been incorporated into this FRMS&P.

8.6. Public Exhibition of the Draft Final FRMS and FRMP

Public exhibition of the Draft Wagga Wagga Revised Murrumbidgee River FRMS and FRMP is required by the Local Government Act (1993, Section 402). This section stipulates that Council must exhibit the draft plan for public comment for a period of at least 28 days, and that submissions must be considered by the council before the plan is endorsed or amended.

The Draft Report was endorsed for public exhibition at the Council meeting on the 23rd October 2017. The Public Exhibition period commenced on the 24th October and was originally scheduled to finish on the 21st November 2017. Following requests from the community, the exhibition period was extended for another two weeks, closing on the 6th December 2017.

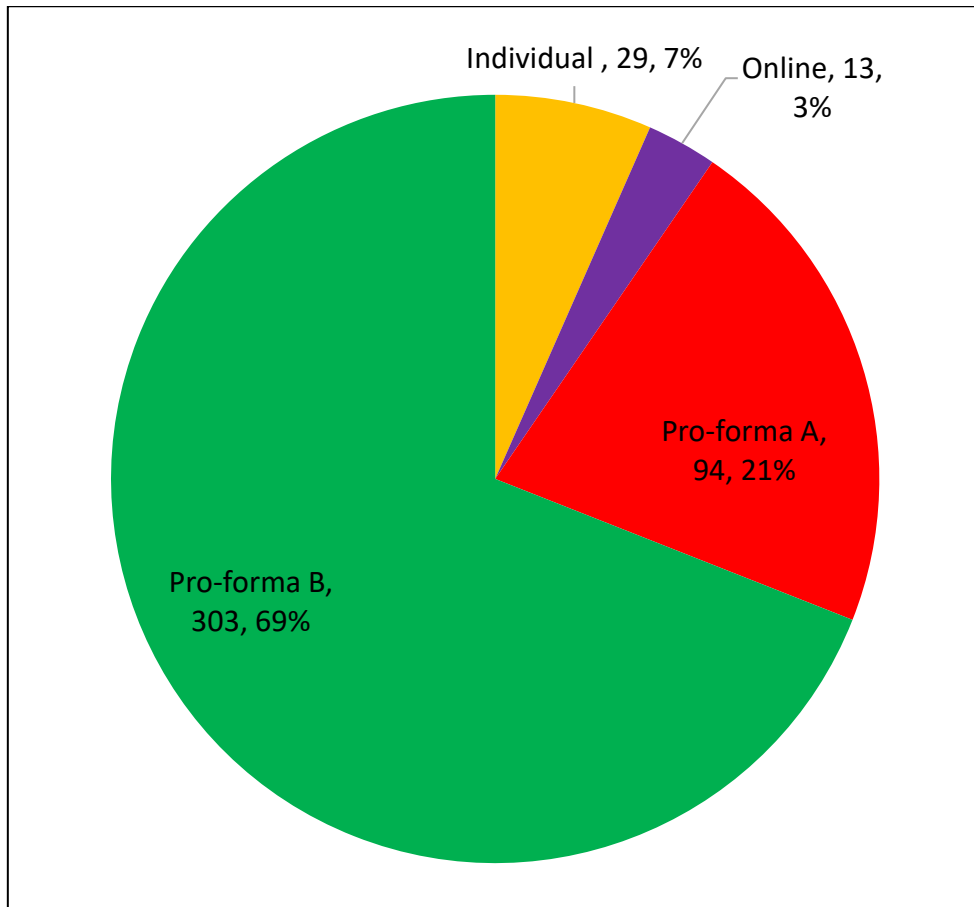
Digital copies of the report were available on the Council website. Nine drop-in sessions were held across the study area, attended by Council and WMAwater staff. The following drop-in sessions were held:

- Gumly Hall, 1/11/17
- Oura Hall, 2/11/17
- Council meeting room, 8/11/17
- Sturt Mall, 9/11/17
- Market Place Shopping Centre, 10/11/17
- Market Place Shopping Centre, 11/11/17
- North Wagga Hall, 14/11/17
- Council Chambers, 15/11/17
- Council Chambers, 30/11/17

8.6.1. Submissions

Residents could make submissions either by writing a letter or email directly to Council, or submitting an online form via the Council 'Have your Say' website. A large number of submissions were in the form of a pre-written proforma signed by individuals. The total number and break down of submission types is shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1 Types of Submissions received during the Public Exhibition Period



8.6.2. Responses to Submissions

All submissions were read and logged by Council and WMAwater. Submissions were categorised into key issues so that responses could be prepared. Due to the sheer number of submissions received, and the fact that many respondents did not provide contact details, it is not possible to personally acknowledge or respond to every submission. Instead, the key issues identified, and responses to each issue have been provided in Appendix M. This appendix also notes any changes to the report that have arisen due to submissions. Specific changes to the report have been documented in Table 1 at the end of Appendix M. The FRMAC reviewed this Appendix in detail prior to changes being made to the report.