

Water Security for the Region – Nullinga Dam

Northern Australia Priority: Developing the North's Water Resources / Infrastructure to support growth / A northern workforce for growth / Good Governance for Northern Australia.

State Electorate: Cook

Federal Electorate: Leichhardt/Kennedy

Council: Cairns Regional Council /Mareeba Shire Council

Priority Recommendation/s

Cairns and Mareeba Councils seek to provide input during the development of the detailed business case for the Nullinga Dam Project and also request that the business case be given priority status to ensure it is completed as a matter of urgency.

Project Overview

The proposed Nullinga Dam site is located on the Walsh River in the Atherton Tablelands and has been proposed as a future water supply to serve growing long-term urban demand in Cairns and to stimulate irrigated agriculture in the region, by supplementing existing supplies.

Building Queensland completed the Nullinga Dam and Other Options Preliminary Business Case in 2017. The preliminary business case has been made publicly available to inform stakeholders and community members of the analysis underpinning the outcomes.

Since completing the preliminary business case, industry provided information that satisfied the triggers based on potential demand to progress to the next stage of development – the detailed business case stage.

Preparation of the full business case is now being undertaken by Building Queensland with SunWater as the project proponent. The detailed business case is expected to be delivered in early 2019.

The development of Nullinga Dam is consistent with the Federal Government Northern Australia policy and also represents a significant regional infrastructure project which could be delivered in collaboration with the Queensland State Government. The project would deliver significant additional water capacity for agricultural development on the Atherton Tablelands thereby contributing to substantial increases in both gross regional product and employment. These benefits are expected to be quantified in the detailed business case. The project also has the potential to contribute positively to the long term urban water security and supply for Cairns through its anticipated interaction with the existing Mareeba Dimbulah Water Supply Scheme.

Subject to the outcomes of the detailed business case, the project may also be eligible for funding through the Federal Government's Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) funding.

Key Strategic Drivers

Economic	Supports long-term water security which underpins the sustainability and capacity for growth of regional industry. Secure access to irrigated water supply supports the regions agricultural sector.
Social Enterprise	Supports long-term water security for urban and regional community use and population growth.
Employment	Generates employment during construction and post-completion.
Tourism	Development of recreation and tourism ventures.