

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1637

asked on Tuesday, 13 November 2018

MR D LAST ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, MINES AND ENERGY (HON DR A LYNHAM)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the changes to the Australian National Committee on Large Dams (ANCOLD), dam wall safety guidelines of accommodating 1 in 15,000-year events—

Will the Minister advise (a) the estimated overall cost to the State Government, and its associated Government Owned Corporations, to meet the new compliance standards, (b) the estimated overall cost for local governments to upgrade and bring their 133 referral dams up to standard and (c) whether the state is considering any financial assistance to local governments to implement this work?

ANSWER:

ANCOLD is an Australian based industry body that focusses on 'disseminating knowledge, developing capability and providing guidance in achieving excellence for all aspects of dam engineering, management and associated issues'. ANCOLD does not perform a regulatory function in relation to dam safety within Queensland.

The Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (the department) regulates dam safety in Queensland under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*. The department sets safety standards for referable dams through regulatory guidelines. A dam is referable if a failure impact assessment demonstrates there would be two or more people at risk if the dam were to fail.

The Guidelines for Acceptable Flood Capacity for Water Dams July 2017 (the AFC guidelines) mandates requirements for spillway adequacy for referable dams. The guidelines, which have fundamentally been unchanged since their introduction in 2007, are based on the consequence category, or risk level, of the referable dam and do not apply a single criteria such as a probability of a 1 in 15 000-year event.

Section 4 of the AFC guidelines details the upgrade schedule for referable dams in Queensland and establishes the minimum required timing for the completion of upgrades to referable dams through until 2035.

- (a) Dam upgrades are the responsibility of the dam owner and, as at 5 October 2018, 16 improvement projects for state-owned dams were being undertaken in Queensland. This includes dams owned by SunWater, Seqwater and the department.

There are multiple major dam improvement projects for state-owned dams planned for delivery by 2030, and the 2018–19 State Budget included a \$30.74 million capital allocation for dam improvement projects being undertaken

in the current year. The full cost of the state's dam improvement program is not yet available as the design options for several major projects are yet to be determined.

- (b) Presently there are 109 referable dams. Of the 109 referable dams, 35 are owned by local governments. A total upgrade cost for the referable dams owned by local governments which require upgrading is not available. These upgrades are managed on an individual basis by those owners.
- (c) The department engages with local government referable dam owners on a regular basis however has not entered into specific discussions regarding funding assistance for dam upgrades.