

**-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-**

**16 MARCH 2023:**

### **RED TAPE CONGESTS CREEK**

Concerns have again been raised about vegetation growth along the Muttama Creek, especially through the Cootamundra Township.

Considering recent flooding events and public comment, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) wishes to inform residents of the situation as it relates to calls for cleaning out, dredging and removal of vegetation from Muttama Creek within the town boundaries.

The Muttama Creek is a designated watercourse and any activities, such as excavation or removal of vegetation and others, proposed to be undertaken within a watercourse have to be approved by the issue of a licence which requires the consideration and input of various State Agencies. Approvals are not always forthcoming.

Some of the State Agencies potentially involved in this type of issue include WaterNSW, NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI Fisheries) and potentially Local Land Services. These Agencies are tasked with protecting rivers and creeks and ensuring that local aquatic life is protected and enhanced, creek banks are stable and not subject to erosion, native vegetation is not degraded to name several outcomes they are tasked to achieve.

Suffice to say that CGRC is not in a position to simply undertake works in a watercourse which is heavily regulated by the NSW State Government. Simple dredging or clearing of the Muttama creek falls within the activities that are restricted under various guidelines administered by the various State Agencies.

CGRC is permitted to undertake the clearing of culverts at the causeways immediately up and downstream as this particular area is exempt.

Should Council, or other bodies, wish to undertake extensive clearing and changes to the waterway which potentially impact the issues that the State Agencies are tasked with protecting, then ultimately these Government Departments have the final say on approval.

CGRC is currently engaging consultants to undertake the Cootamundra Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan. A draft of this study and plan is expected to be approved for public exhibition at the upcoming March 2023 Council meeting and thereafter the public will have 28 days to make comment.

This study considers the options for the removal of non-native vegetation and concrete channel lining, amongst other potential improvements. As this draft has only been prepared, consideration to undertaking some vegetation control that is within the appropriate guidelines will be considered as soon as possible.

CGRC Mayor Charlie Sheahan said the Cootamundra Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan will enable the review of recent issues seen in Cootamundra with flooding from Muttama Creek.

“It’s timely that this report will be available for public comment and submissions, considering the recent events of October 2022 and March 2023, I urge all residents to take a look at it when the report is on public exhibition, make your submissions whilst these events are all fresh in our minds,” Cr Sheahan said.

“Council regularly undertakes landscaping maintenance along Muttama Creek along with the great work done by the Muttama Creek Regeneration Group with a view of maintaining the area and general amenity for all residents to enjoy,” Cr Sheahan added.

Residents who notice obstructions in the creek are encouraged to report the obstruction to Council by contacting the customer service team who will log the enquiry and forward to the necessary team for clean-up.

**Picture & Caption:** Muttama Creek exploded from its meandering path on Monday 13 March 2023 near Bradman Oval in Cootamundra. Management of Muttama Creek has come under fire, whilst Council wades through red tape.



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Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council  
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