

Our ref: OUT24/12561

Ms. Xanthe Smith

NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)

19 August 2024

Subject: Proposed dams safety levy

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this submission for Dams Safety NSW (DSNSW).

IPART has been asked by the NSW State Government to investigate the efficient costs of Dams Safety NSW (DSNSW) carrying out its functions under the *Dams Safety Act 2015* and recommend a methodology for recovering these costs from declared dam owners. DSNSW will assist IPART by providing information to assist the inquiry. We write to address a factual issue and cover some other matters in reply to IPART's July 2024 draft report.

There is a discrepancy in reported staff roles, which readers may find confusing. Providing additional background in the report may clarify this. The main report lists DSNSW as having 25 staff roles, while the FTI consultant report shows 24. Both figures are accurate, however, the difference lies in the context. The consultant's report reflects the roles filled during FY23/24, whereas the main report's figure of 25 includes an additional officer role that was added in FY24/25 to enhance our compliance capabilities. Providing this context will help readers understand the difference.

We expect administering the levy and handling the associated reporting could require approximately 0.4 FTE of an administrative-level position. This role will need to be budgeted for separately, as it is not covered as a support function by our portfolio department (DCCEEW) and must be independently funded. Funding for this role has not been included in the proposed levy design.

I can confirm our actual expenditure for FY23/24 was \$4.88M, exceeding the estimated figure of \$4.6M used in the report as the basis for the levy calculation. It would be beneficial to update the estimated full-year figure with this confirmed actual amount.

Department of Planning and Environment

Additionally, I highlight our existing capacity for cost recovery in certain situations, as detailed in sections 18(4), 19(4), and 21(8) of the *Dams Safety Act 2015*. Incorporating this information into the report could be beneficial. Your insights on the connection between this capability and the proposed levy structure would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Salkovic
Chief Executive Officer
Dams Safety NSW