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Tamworth emergency water supply plan: council moves critical review by NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian



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Water Pressure



EMERGENCY WATER PLAN: Tamworth Regional Council has approved the emergency water supply plan for the region for if Chaffey Dam runs dry. Photo: Peter Hardin

FRUSTRATION with a lack of water security was palpable at the Tamworth Regional Council meeting on Tuesday night.

Councillors adopted [the emergency water supply plan that sets out the critical steps if Chaffey Dam runs dry](#).

The council will ask NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian to urgently review it, as the question of who pays for the major infrastructure options hangs in the balance.

Councillor Glenn Inglis moved an amendment to the motion to request NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian to critically review the emergency plan.

"The options are expensive, extremely expensive, I couldn't get over the annual operating costs of truck-based water carting," he said.

"It's only \$15 million, incredible isn't it?"

If a big-ticket option is the preferred option, there's at least a 12 month wait to make it happen.

Cr Inglis said a discussion needed to be had now with the state government as to who was going to pay for the most expensive options.

"We can't be having a bloody argument and debates at that critical time about who's going to pay for it because it's fairly obvious who would need to," he said.

"That needs to be done in a proper way and the state government needs to budget just like we do."

Non-essential businesses could be shut down if the water situation grows dire enough, and councillor Russell Webb said it is a "terrible travesty of justice".

The plan has two phases, the first starts immediately and focuses on short-term gains and improvements to the city's existing supply through less water use, and more water saved.

It could involve [the temporary suspension of the water sharing plans](#) to keep water in the dam for critical human needs.

Phase two begins when Chaffey Dam has just 18 months supply left.

Tamworth will be forced to find a second major emergency water supply source with a pipeline to either Copeton, Split Rock or Keepit dam.

New wells would need to be drilled in either the Peel alluvium and fractured rock source, or the Upper Namoi alluvium around Carroll.

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Large water users will need to use reclaimed effluent water. At the moment 4.2ML of the estimated 7.5ML of non-residential use goes to the top four major users, all in the meat processing industry.

Councillor Helen Tickle said she could not understand why the state government had not already moved to suspend water sharing plans and save critical water supplies for the region.

"The authorities don't want to listen to the people," she said.

"All because the bureaucrats and unfortunately our government ministers think it's going to rain and now the inevitable has happened."

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