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Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC
Chair, Select Committee on PFAS Contamination in Waterways and Drinking Water Supplies Throughout New South Wales
Legislative Council
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2001

By email to: PFAS@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Chair

Response to Questions on Notice

Thank you for the invitation to participate at the Committee's 4 February 2025 hearing held at the University of Newcastle.

During the hearing I took a question on notice. Please find a detailed response is below:

Question	The CHAIR: Mr Cleary, who is responsible for monitoring the movement of the contaminated groundwater in the Williamtown area? Who is overall responsible for that? DARREN CLEARY: We have responsibility for monitoring it, with respect to our drinking water source, which covers the majority of the aquifer. Our responsibility obviously relates to using that as a drinking water source. That is the result we provide to NSW Health. We do also share those with other agencies such as NSW EPA as part of that PFAS taskforce. The NSW EPA have responsibility as it relates to environment protection and managing contaminated sites. The CHAIR: The two pump stations—it was 7 and 9. Is that right? There is an embargo on those two. DARREN CLEARY: Correct. **The CHAIR: What are the PFAS levels within those two pump stations? I assume we test them regularly, those bores.** DARREN CLEARY: We don't test them regularly at the moment because testing them—getting representative samples requires you to run the bores, so we don't test them very regularly and they are not in production. We have never had a PFAS detected at bore station 7, and that is due to the hydrology of the region. But we have isolated it as a very conservative approach to be sure that we are not drawing contaminated water into that bore. At bore station 9, it's at levels that have been, I think, above the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines but relatively low levels. **But I would have to take on notice the exact concentrations.**
Response	Two Hunter Water pump stations that are located within the Williamtown Management Area (Pump Station 7 and Pump Station 9) are embargoed by Hunter Water. These Pump Stations and their bores are not used for drinking water. This embargo has been in place since September 2014. This embargo remains in place in accordance with the operating protocols that have been developed and endorsed by the NSW PFAS Expert Panel. Since being embargoed, Pump Station 7 has been maintained mechanically and electronically so that it can be operated, while Pump Station 9 is inoperable. The status of the pump stations impacts the type of water quality monitoring samples that

	can be taken. Representative water quality monitoring samples of extracted groundwater can only be taken from operational Pump Stations. The last time that Pump Station 9 was sampled in an operational state was in 2015. At that time, a representative sample detected PFOS at a concentration of 0.17 micrograms per Litre. Since that time sampling has been limited to individual spearpoints (bores), with the highest recorded values being 0.070 micrograms per Litre for PFOS in a Hunter Water sample, and 2.91 micrograms per Litre for PFOS and PFHxS in a sample taken by AECOM for the Department of Defence. The maximum detection of PFOA in a Hunter Water sample was 0.003 micrograms per Litre, and 0.09 micrograms per Litre in an AECOM sample for the Department of Defence. Further to my evidence at the hearing, I wish to clarify that in 2023, PFHxS was detected for the first time in one sample from an individual spearpoint (bore) at Pump Station 7, at a concentration of 0.028 micrograms per Litre. Consistent with my evidence at the inquiry, I confirm that PFOA and PFOS have not been detected in spearpoint samples taken at Pump Station 7 by Hunter Water and none of the three PFAS compounds have been detected in a representative sample taken by running Pump Station 7.

Yours sincerely

Darren Cleary
Managing Director