

## WaterNSW responses to Question on Notice

**The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT:** I think I might have belled the cat on this one a bit earlier, and this might be a nothing scenario, but I'm just wondering: Are WaterNSW assets such as Medlow Dam and Greaves Creek traditionally available for firefighting purposes? Obviously this is a question for WaterNSW.

**RONAN MAGAHARAN:** Yes. I'm not aware of any circumstances where it might have been used, but certainly we can take that on notice and look. But it's not traditionally provided for firefighting purposes. That does not mean—in bushfires, a helicopter may have extracted water from those dams for firefighting purposes.

**The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT:** I guess my question is—where I'm clearly going is—I wonder if any consideration was given to the fact that, if we did have an incident throughout the summer or even now, we might face a situation where someone, in an instant, has to make the decision: Do we let that country burn or do we put PFAS-contaminated water on it? Has any consideration been given to that decision beforehand—and who would be involved in that decision—rather than someone having to make it on the spot?

**RONAN MAGAHARAN:** Yes. We work very closely with the RFS and, in fact, throughout Sydney's declared catchment, the RFS and National Parks. We work quite closely with them in terms of firefighting. There is an approved list of chemicals which are used and the RFS is aware of, and then we also have people sit at the control desk, essentially, discussing options for accessing water. So those decisions can be made through the control rooms, fighting the various fires, with the relevant people.

**The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT:** Would you be able to take on notice for me whether any consideration or advice was given to that situation where there was a potential we could have been putting PFAS-contaminated water onto the land?

**RONAN MAGAHARAN:** I can take that on notice, yes.

### **Answer**

WaterNSW works closely with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) in bushfire prevention and management.

Historically, Medlow Dam and Greaves Creek Dam have been made available for firefighting purposes. However, the nearby Cascades Dams are favored by helicopters for extraction of water for firefighting due to the topography surrounding these dams, resulting in easier access for aircraft.

Specific questions on water collection for firefighting operations are best addressed to the RFS, as the lead combat agency for bushfires in NSW.