



Summer Hill Creekcare,



10th November 2022

Submission [Macquarie-Castlereagh Water Strategy](#) Second Draft

Due: Friday, 18 November 2022

Email: regionalwater.strategies@dpie.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to make comment on this draft. Summer Hill Creekcare is a landcare group north of Orange that sees caring for the environment and productivity of Summer Hill Creek and its catchment as one of its highest priorities.

The main problem that we can see with this draft is that it tries to be all things to all men. It is not possible to meet all the objectives stated as many of them conflict. When I raised this issue during the webinar on 24th October, it was admitted by the presenter 'Yes, it is a challenge'. So the draft needs to be much more honest about what it can and cannot achieve. If the people of the Macquarie-Castlereagh catchment are prepared to lose environmental flows in the river system because they want more industry or urban growth, then so be it. But the plan does not provide that information. It says we can do it all, and we cannot. Furthermore, under the NSW Water Management Act, the health of the river system and its habitats should be top priority. This plan does not reflect this.

To achieve the state environmental outcomes, the regions will have to transition to a steady state economy with caps on urban growth and encouragement of industries much less reliant on heavy water use.

Below are some more specific points to consider:

1. The plan does not take sufficient account of climate change and the risk of extreme droughts in the future.

2. SHCC objects to the plan to take further water from the Macquarie
3. Drought of record should be updated for all water entitlement classes
4. SHCC supports increased involvement of First Nations' people in water management
5. We object to the implementation of Floodplain Harvesting program, which is highly problematic for the downstream users and environment. This program needs complete overhaul, including assessment of historic activities, to ensure no downstream impacts
6. There should be no more extraction from Summer Hill Creek. It is already acknowledged to be highly stressed and its condition should be enhanced, rather than permitted to be further degraded.

It is encouraging to see that the government is taking a long term approach to water management and that consideration of effects on the environment and access to cultural water is taken seriously. However, the strategies outlined in the plan will lead to further degradation and will not achieve the desired outcome.

Yours

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