

DRAFT MACQUARIE-CASTLEREAGH REGIONAL WATER STRATEGY

SUBMISSION

Firstly, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Regional Watering Strategy I support the process although I believe the community consultation in my region here in the lower Macquarie that is the Marshes to the Barwon was very poor almost non-existent. Saying that I still support some of the options put forward of water security for towns and communities.

My view is that a lot of these long list options will not provide water security for towns and communities as a whole, they will benefit part of a community at the detriment of another community both economic and socially

MAINTAINING AND DIVERSIFYING WATER SUPPLIES

There is one option on the long list I'm gravely opposed to a New mid system Re-regulating Structure in the Mid Macquarie(option 1). This proposal intent to capture regulated water order rejections this could be simply fixed with direct order debiting rules put in place. If this was the only reason for this structure. I believe this will become a Dam, a tool used to capture unreg water to be used to fill water orders. NSW Water already use Tributary flows to fill water orders this new tool could become the death of the Lower Macquarie, The Macquarie Marshes and unregulated Irrigator. Less water making it to these areas which have been hardest hit by over allocation and most recently crippling drought. The objectives for this option are Local Communities and Economic Prosperity I feel that these objectives are misused as this option would be a gain for one end of the system and disastrous for the other. This structure would be a change of shares.

Connecting a pipeline to Nyngan (options 8, 9) from proposed re-reg structure at Gin GIN this proposal should be considered from the Gunningbar offtake this would ensure that the Macquarie above this offtake will be looked after. Also, if this was to be piped it could be used to return water back to the Macquarie when needed. As for a pipeline from Burrendong I think would a catastrophic failure in the management of water. Is more Irrigation this important to the general community or just those that profit from it?

Increasing Burrendong Dam Supply Full Level (option 12) This option would decrease large flows to the Macquarie Marshes and Lower Macquarie reduce connectivity to the Barwon also decrease the amount of bird breeding events in the Marshes, as well as putting towns at risk with less Flood Mitigation Zone, given that with climate change we are having more extremes this option could be seen as reckless.

Manage Aquifer Recharge (option 3) I can see this working for town storage but can see difficulties arising with extractive user i.e. who's water is it? who's rates are paying for this water? Who is benefitting? Also, this could change aquifer recharge rates creating even more difficulties.

I'm all for increasing town water security be it through ground water drought rules reuse and recycle but feel the best way is to update the drought of record. The inter-regional connection project could encourage reckless use of water and create a race to the bottom scenario between valleys.

PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL SYSTEM

Protecting and enhancing our natural system says it all about these options, I really like most of these. Connectivity with Down Stream Systems (option 31) This is my Favourite option, the best

approach to a healthy river is to look from the bottom up not the top down. If there was a target to be met with unreg water from the tributaries the whole system would be much improved. As a member of the Macquarie Environmental Water Advisory Group I'm aware that connectivity to the Barwon is a major objective we strive to achieve with planned environmental water. This is made very difficult by the constant drying out of the unreg section due to reduced targets to the end of the regulated section of the river by NSW Water. Also made difficult with water used out of tribs to fill water orders which will only get worse if the mid river storage is built.

The two options I'm not in favour of in this section are Talga Wetlands on the Lower Crooked Creek and securing flows for Ewenmar Creek these areas still have there natural offtakes when flow height are reached, watering these specific areas when other areas that naturally get water at a lower heights are not receiving water.

SUPPORTING WATER USE EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

The piping of stock and domestic water could face some challengers as most people have an affinity with their river it also does not address the social and culture needs that are part of living on a river or creek. The lower Macquarie has already had this piped stock and domestic proposed to us. It was rejected because of a couple of reasons one being the lower river has been hit badly through over allocation and is dry most of the time now and most people have already had to source other water for their stock and domestic. I think it's worth looking into options 33 and 34

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS FOR CLIMATE EXTREMES

Climate Change preparedness is going to see us into a future so all of the option in this section are worth investigating especially Review of Regulated River Water and Accounting and Allocation Process (option 37) considering that through the last drought we hit rock bottom in the Macquarie, the main risk with present management is allocating water that hasn't rained yet, predicting of inflows if these don't arrive it puts pressure on NSW Water to deliver which in turn puts towns and communities at risk. This should be changed to allocating water that is already in the Dam.

IMPROVING RECOGNITION OF ABORIGINAL POEPLS WATER RIGHTS, INTERESTS AND ACCESS TO WATER

Aboriginal engagement is important to keep our communities on track so all options in this section are important to carry out

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these options.

Yours sincerely

