



Greening Bathurst
PO Box 1469
INC # 9874933
Bathurst, NSW
2795

18th November 2022

The Department of Planning and Environment

**Re; Submission to the Regional Water Strategy-
Macquarie/Castlereagh Catchments**

To whom it may concern,

The Members of Greening Bathurst wish to thank those within the Department of Planning and Environment for the opportunity to respond to the draft strategy as released in October 2022.

The timing of this document is particularly pleasing, being at a time when the cycle of wet and dry seems to be reaching the conclusion of a severely wet period. It is our understanding that it is better to consider these judgements during such times rather than when water supply within the catchments are at a low ebb, thereby logically reducing the passion created when water is more scarce.

The new set of climate data which this draft strategy is based upon, indicates that the coming decades will generally be drier, hotter and will be associated with higher rates of evaporation. The data also points to an increasing level of unpredictability, something which will make future decision making in regard to “cease to pump” declarations, a highly contentious pastime. The conditions for such decisions as laid down in this strategy, need to be clearly defined.

It seems to us that in the past, oversubscription of water rights and a lack of regulatory oversight, particularly in the Upper Macquarie Catchment, have led us to a point in time where the most important concept of water allocations, will be the increased efficiency of water use, in those areas over which we have some control such as agricultural, industrial and domestic uses. The environmental needs of water **MUST** be monitored closely to make sure that shortages are not producing extremely negative effects in the plant and animal communities.

At this time we wish to acknowledge the efforts of Bathurst Regional Council who have maintained water restrictions through these wetter times, despite the objections of some sections of the Community. It is essential that all people living and working in our catchments must change the past cultures of water use. Cultural change involving such a crucial factor in our lives is a long term process.

Other, less recent, water management judgements by the Bathurst Regional Council have not been so well thought out.

One of the locally acquired ideas put forward is to raise the Chifley Dam wall or alternately, build a new dam downstream of the existing wall. Greening Bathurst is against such a project because of the environmental consequences of such a plan, assuming even, that it receives a positive cost benefit analysis from an independent source.

We would support the Council should they see the need to require compulsory installation of water tanks in any new developments.

This could be achieved by BRC adopting appropriate changes in new DCPs,

We are also concerned that a lack of reliable data in the past and leading into the future, could lead to poor decision making. Further expansion of the automatic weather station network would be of some help if we find that the current dataset is inadequate to support our critical decision making.

For your consideration,

Ashley Bland,
Chair Greening Bathurst