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Subject: Submission FNC Water Strategy

#### SUBMISSION- FNC WATER STRATEGY

My name is [REDACTED]. I own a home in Lismore, where I have resided for the past 18 years. I previously lived in other parts of the Northern Rivers and the Far North Coast. I have known and cared for this country for nearly six decades.

Water is one of the main things that make this area so wonderful and its health, cleanliness and availability mean a great deal to all of us. I'd like to take the opportunity here to thank the DPIE for all the work done in developing the Far North Coast Water Strategy.

There are many great options put forward in The Strategy. Forward-planning is vital to the future health and well-being of this area's water supply. That is why I felt I must raise my concerns about the massively unpopular proposed Dunoon Dam and urge the DPIE not to rely too heavily on Rous's Future Water Project 2060.

I ask that you dismiss "Option 14" of the Draft Regional Water Strategy, the New Dunoon Dam on Rocky Creek, as being unsuitable, highly controversial and very destructive.

Widespread Opposition to the Proposed Dunoon Dam

A huge 91% of the 1290 written and online submissions to the RCC opposed the proposed dam option, and for very good reasons. Respondents generally preferred a range of other options and felt some of these possibilities had not been seriously examined by RCC at all.

There is a high level of community engagement in this process and a general belief that Rous and Lismore Council have not alerted the DPIE to the extent of community resistance to this project.

The Dunoon Dam proposal has been unpopular from the beginning. Even Rous's Future Water 2060

Project itself states in its "background" section that right back in 2008-2013 "Public consultation undertaken at the time indicated that the community's preference was for RCC to consider the future water supply issues more broadly before proceeding with Dunoon Dam".

I'd still like them to consider future water supply more broadly: - efficiencies, purified recycled water, desalination and other options need to be more closely examined.

Climate Change and Water System Resilience

RCC have clearly failed to plan for water resilience using modern technologies. System resilience wasn't even mentioned in Rous Future Water Project 2060. The Net Present Value and other financial information for Indirect Potable Reuse wasn't calculated. Only groundwater and Dunoon Dam were really looked into seriously.

In a quickly changing climate, it is vital that we move away from high-risk investments that rely on rain. Water Services Association of Australia describes dams as "high risk". Professor Stuart Khan of UNSW has said that a resilient water system would have a thirty-to-fifty per cent supply from sources that don't depend on rain.

At a time like this we need to be seriously considering water efficiency,

which is cheap and effective (All Options On The Table, p3 <https://www.wsaas.asn.au/publication/all-options-table-lessons-journeys-others>) and was recommended by the 2020 NSW Productivity Commission Green Paper.

Professor Stuart White identified significant potential increases in Rous water supplies through efficiency measures that Rous has so far ignored. RCC left water efficiency out of its 2020 Integrated Water Cycle Management Development options.

The NSW Productivity Greenpaper 2020 recommends water efficiencies and the use of new sources like purified recycled water. These are the sorts of options we need to see utilised, rather than a dam that is so very destructive of Aboriginal heritage, the environment, Big Scrub rainforest and threatened species. Aboriginal Heritage A repetition of the disrespect shown to Aboriginal people by Rio Tinto at Juukan rock Shelters is on the cards if the Dunoon Dam goes ahead. Destruction of Aboriginal heritage by Dunoon Dam is just unacceptable. The 2011 Cultural Impact Statement says "Aboriginal Stakeholders are of the opinion that the sites should remain undisturbed and that no level of disturbance is considered acceptable to them." Back in 2011 the Northern Star newspaper reported the following:

8th Dec 2011 2:00 AM

THE controversial Dunoon Dam proposal is likely to be scrapped following the discovery of indigenous sacred sites within the inundation area.

Yet still RCC pursue this, as the "cheapest" option.

Rous County Council commissioned a second Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in 2013 and is apparently asking the Wijabal Wia-bal people to do yet another one now! Will they just keep trying to do more until they get the result they want? Back in 2014, an Integrated Water Planning report said that although the dam was "technically viable" it had "significant environmental and social constraints associated with threatened and endangered terrestrial ecology and culturally significant Aboriginal Heritage". The idea should have been laid to rest years ago!

Destruction of Environment, Big Scrub and Threatened Species

There is only 1% of the Big Scrub Rainforest left and the proposed dam site includes 62 hectares of Lowland Rainforest Endangered Ecological Community (EEC). Nine threatened flora species will be severely impacted. There have been 17 fauna species identified here that are listed as threatened under the TSC Act NSW (the koala, one fruit bat, six microbats, eight birds and one frog).

The Channon Gorge is the rare mix of warm-temperate rainforest on sandstone, but the dam wall construction will destroy 92% of it. Recent bushfires devastated koala populations across the country and the construction of this dam would put the koala under further extinction pressure, with the severing of koala corridors and destruction of habitat. The platypus is already threatened with extinction and will suffer further extinction pressure with those breeding on Rocky Creek suffering loss of habitat. The loss of habitat will also affect nearly all of the endangered

Eastern Freshwater Cod. There is an existing NSW DPI Eastern Freshwater Cod

Recovery Plan to restore this species to the Rocky Creek and Richmond River systems, showing the importance to these fish of the existing habitat.

Another 16 native fish species are threatened by the significant and permanent loss of this habitat, including Oxleyan Pygmy Perch and Purple Spotted Gudgeon, according to the 2011 Rous Aquatic Survey.

With so many other viable options that show more forward-thinking than the proposed Dunoon

dam, I hope we can all live to see a more sustainable and effective use of water in this area along with a growing respect for the magnificence of the Far North Coast and Northern Rivers regions and all of its diverse peoples.

Thank you for your consideration of this submission.

Regards,

