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Submission for the Western Regional Water Strategy

This submission contains some notes and general comments after reading of the Western Regional water Strategy including the supporting appendices (Stake holder summary, Aboriginal consultation Options list and Connectivity Factsheet) for public exhibition. The online submission form was no longer available on the web.

Comments:

My comments are informed by previous experience as landholder/ land management in the Upper Hunter where we had a small vineyard and now in the Midcoast region. I have some experience from the Holistic Management/ regenerative farming Cert 3 from TAFE Western perspective and long association with Landcare and interest in environment.

Complex with many interests already invested in the water.

General themes:

Climate change considerations, plan for the worst predictions more likely to cover the reality of the variability unknown ahead . Here in the coast it is floods requiring a rethink..

“Everything is connected”, I strongly support the options that improve outcomes for river health, native fish, waterbirds and wetlands. Holistic thinking factors in the environmental and social costs and asks is this action Consumptive, setting us up for ongoing cost rather than ameliorating/ healing.

I endorse the Commitments 3 and 4 for environmentally sensitive structures on the flood plain and believe this should be decided before water access licences are granted for Floodplain harvesting.

I note the reliance and on weirs and believe after the experience of Hunter wetlands and many river enviro studies that weirs and levees can be small picture fixes with negatives for the creatures and flows. The river is listed as an endangered aquatic environment and other or modified structures that speak this are less likely to have ongoing costs

Aboriginal First Nations cultural thinking

I believe this is an important shift to make at this time- a perspective that will help make

Coincidentally ABC just screened the film River tonight which speaks to some of this cultural importance for all of us.

I strongly support the involvement of First Nations involvement – such as the River Ranger program and the Options16-22 recognising cultural knowledge and interests.

Town water supplies

River must come first. Ground water quality not to be taken for granted. Consider as broadly as possible off stream options and water conserving practices. No raising of weirs, modifications for the environment to improve situation only.

Consider if water quality is to be greatly compromised is mining or such an industry compatible with land and town capability? Factor in the long term environmental costs.

Strategy is a good time to think how to be good ancestors.

Kind regards

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