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Sent: Thursday, 11 August 2022 4:37 PM
To: nsw.groundwaterstrategy@dpi.nsw.gov.au <nsw.groundwaterstrategy@dpi.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: SUBMISSION FOR NSW GROUNDWATER STRATEGY FROM CLIVE & SIAN QUICK

Preamble: The premise for a groundwater strategy for 20 years is, we believe, extremely shortsighted and impractical considering the speed at which climate change is currently impacting the planet - even five years is doubtful.

SECTION 1

Apparently the Minister is to implement his intentions for virtually unlimited water harvesting.

A flood plain is where water flows from a river/creek over a natural geographical environment i.e. through water courses, gullies etc. and some water returns back to its sources i.e. the river or creek.

Today's flood plains are laser levelled, properties are designed to direct this water into huge storage dams through drains and ditches. Figures suggest as much as 86% is harvested by the ten biggest operators. Is this fair? No it is not an equitable system of distribution.

Of course all the dams collect all the excess fertilizers and chemicals used on the respective properties. This then is released into the environment during big storms.

What method do we have to measure and claim payment for its' usage? The Murray/Darling Basin plan is a complete disaster and currently favours the few. Buy backs or theft?

SECTION II Aquifers:

Overseas studies in America indicate it takes between 300 to 1,000 years for groundwater to reach the aquifers (apparently Sydney University thinks maybe 100 to 1,000 years). This being the case, all recent flooding has not and will not benefit our aquifers for many decades.

A recent study by Stockholm University makes a frightening claim that 'no rainfall anywhere on the planet is safe to drink' this being because our 'forever' chemicals like PFAS's are in the air, sea and rainfall.

Does it not follow then, that these and other chemicals are heading for our aquifers so that we can only hope nature can strip them first?

Other recent reports show around 600,000 Australians' do not have access to clean drinking water,' that available containing arsenic, nitrates etc. Some old mining activities are still polluting - i.e. Rum Jungle who finished mining 20 years ago was never cleaned up. How many mines in NSW are still leaching into waterways and aquifers?

Aquifers do not stop at Borders.

SECTION III Zero Till and Intensive Farming

This leads to soil compaction caused by the constant use of heavy machinery over and over without any soil aeration coupled with this is the use of chemicals to control weeds and insects which in turn leads to soil pollution and a breakdown in the local environment.

We currently have to bring in bees to pollinate almonds, macadamias, blueberries because all local insects have been annihilated.

Massive single crop productions ruin bio-diversity necessary for our survival.

SECTION IV Local Environmental Plans

In 1987 [REDACTED] made verbal submissions to a review of our BLEP suggesting two things which appeared to be a certainty in the future:-

- (a) Shortage of drinking water for public use;
- (b) That all houses should be fitted with water tanks.

We were told by the Ballina Shire Council there will be no shortage of potable water and that tanks only hold dirty water having bird droppings etc. It was pointed out that many country/rural people lived on tank water - staff were not interested.

(c) LEPS should not allow the filling of wetlands, lowlands, swamps and that canal development requires very serious control. Again Council staff found

this somewhat amusing. Recent local flooding caused havoc in Ballina Shire - chickens come home to roost!

SECTION VI Shortage of Notifications of Bores/Water Mining

Since the closure of many local newspapers it is virtually impossible to know when a new bore or water extraction is proposed. A couple of examples - my wife noticed a Development Application for a proposed 'water supply system' near our small farm. Research revealed it was for a 24 hour/7 day week water extraction system to supply a water bottling plant. There was no advice to us or the people of the local shire who had proposed to use this aquifer for the supply of public water.

It is almost impossible to contact our area office of Water NSW. There was, fortunately, a backlash from locals and Council eventually rejected the D/A. The Council requested the NSW Chief Scientist to investigate and meet with the public. We participated and were amazed at the lack of information available on aquifers. The Associated Papers provided to investigate this D/A were totally inadequate.

Another example we objected to and which was withdrawn was a licence to sink a bore through the Alstonville Aquifer into the New England Fold to supply another intensive plant nursery. The applicant already had a bore licence for Plateau water, dams, and access to recycled water from Council. If that much water is required surely the proposal is environmentally irresponsible.

NSW Water has a very poor record on compliance, oversight etc. and too many other agencies seem to be 'bit' players without controls or Compliance Officers i.e. Dept of Agriculture, EPA, local government.

Where are all the chemicals, oils, asbestos leaching to from the local Council tip? - straight into the water table and aquifer and it may take another 50 years or more to reach them, and once polluted you cannot clean them.

There is an old saying 'you can live without love, but you cannot live without water'.

Clive & Sian Quick

11 August 2022

NOTE: We will be express posting this submission along with 2 attachments - not being computer literate I don't know how to attach to this email.

They are: 1. Copy Water Reform Action 2018 - dated 14 April 2018
 2. Copy of recent unpublished letter to Sydney Morning Herald 15 April 2018