

From: [REDACTED]
To: [DPIE W Regional Water Strategies Mailbox](#)
Subject: Proposed Action 1.3
Date: Friday, 25 November 2022 12:12:16 PM

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows
To Whom it may Concern,

I would like to pass comment on the proposed suspension of environmental flows from the Winburndale Dam in Extreme drought.

I strongly disagree with this Proposal Action 1.3 and as a rural landholder along the Winburndale Rivulet we saw firsthand in the last drought 2017-March 2021 how the Bathurst Council badly managed the out flows of the dam at the expense of the rivulet's environmental health, biodiversity and landholders basic right to stock and domestic supply.

The water was diverted for industrial purposes and to irrigate sporting fields, surely this usage of precious water in drought times should not be seen as a higher need than the critical human needs of Landholders requiring supply for their livestock and domestic needs. At the end of the drought period in March 2020 the Winburndale Dam still had 70 % capacity. This meant that stopping the environmental flows from the dam which was an environmental disaster for the river were excessive and were harsh measures that should not have been taken.

It seems that people making the decisions during the last drought do not have a full understanding of the river system and how the water aquifers work. We had conversations with Council that said, "there is no point releasing any water as it is only going into the gravel and disappearing". This was their justification for stopping the environmental flows with obviously no understanding that water naturally travels through the gravel and comes to the surface in the waterholes and that is how the habitat survives.

The actions to suspend the environmental flows should not be subject to "triggers" but only enacted after significant consultation with the Water Minister and only in a worst case climatic catastrophe.

Even though the Winburndale Dam is council owned it is part of the headwaters of the Murray – Darling Basin and it should be managed under the State government guidelines which take a more holistic view of the river system rather than be subject to the knee jerk actions of a local council.

If Bathurst cannot supply its water needs in times of drought without destroying the environment and taking stock and domestic supplies from farmers council should be considering if Bathurst has reached its limits in terms of growth.... If however the aim by Bathurst Council is to continue to grow by the projected number. Infrastructure measures should be taken **now** to increase the storage capacity of Chifley Dam. The past Mayor of Bathurst Mr. Ian McIntosh had great foresight as he was instrumental in extending the height of the Chifley Dam wall and it is a remarkable legacy to him. He was a can-do person and would have had a lot of opposition at the time. It is now time to further increase the wall again to provide for the growth in population. The Macquarie River Flats would be a good and reliable source of underground water and if bores were constructed, they could be used to irrigate the sporting fields and supply industrial needs. It is vital that more water sources are constructed as the existing available water is not sufficient to meet the city's needs in severe drought periods with even the current population.

Kind Regards,

