

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Quaama NSW 2550
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam

Submission to the South Coast Draft Regional Water Strategy

We own [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Operating a commercial dairy, [REDACTED], we milk 700 cows, produce 5.6 million litres of milk, and employ 10 people (5 full time). We have grown our business of recent times and have chosen to become more extensive in nature (purchasing more land) rather than more intensive with producing more from the existing land area. This is predominantly due to the restrictions of the water sharing plans and unreliable water supply.

One of our recent acquisitions is a recently closed down dairy farm [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

This farm has the potential to produce over 3 million litres of milk, employ 3 to 4 people and be an economically viable independent entity. However, it only has a 63ML irrigation license. The terrain is undulating and very suitable to effective irrigation and homegrown feed production. Unless we can economically acquire additional irrigation license and build 3 large catchment dams, this property will remain as a beef enterprise and employ no staff.

This situation is repeated with our most recent acquisition of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

However the two dams when constructed 5 years ago, were limited in size to 100ML when the sites were conducive to 200+ML, and there was no high flow conversion granted on transferring the license from the stream to the dam. These two issues effectively reduced the ability of this farm to develop and grow. The extra water capacity would have turned this area from an unviable 1.2ML dairy to a viable 3.0+ ML dairy employing 3-4 people. Under the current water rules it will remain as a fodder farm to support our original dairy, employing no extra people.

It is not economically viable to adopt the most modern and efficient irrigation infrastructure without reliable access to a suitable amount of water. Given the normal local region rainfall pattern, this water must be captured and stored on-farm during rainfall events else it is lost to sea. Facilitating the construction of

large (200ML+) on farm dams is essential to the region's economic productivity into the future. We are producing food for an ever-increasing world population that needs to eat. Water management, specifically on-farm storage, is key to a successful future given the changing climate that we are all operating in.

In this region, irrigation licenses are unprocurable. In the Murrah catchment, which has the unique situation of being undersubscribed, there are only 35 individuals that hold all the irrigation licenses. This is not a quantity that facilitates any trading. The only way to acquire additional license is to purchase the farm where the license is held. An increase in the harvestable right to 30-40% or more, and the ability to trade this for on-farm storage and irrigation use, would invigorate the community to build infrastructure and invest in their businesses.

The following options identified in the Draft Regional Water Strategy that we support are listed below as they will improve water reliability for agriculture

Option No.	Title	Notes
13.	Increased harvestable rights for coastal draining catchments	Should be increased to at least 40%
16.	Increased on farm water storage	This is essential for all farms with suitable sites, including beef and grazing properties.
20.	Increased capacity of Brogo Dam	Strongly supported this however it needs to result in a significant increase in allocation access for active water licence holders.
15	Increased industry access to high flows	Needs to be implemented in conjunction with on farm water storage. Need to be able to convert instream licences through a multiplier to onfarm dam storage licences.
14	Improve releases from Cochrane Dam to better match water demands of irrigators	Minimum daily year round releases from Cochrane Dam are required when stream flows are low to maintain base flows. Daily releases are required to minimize ecological stress on the river during these times.
38	Increase general security allocations in the Bega/Brogo regulated river system	The Brogo is currently over allocated and the non active licences are contributing to the underutilization of the dam.

		Should be implemented in conjunction with Option 34 Active and effective water markets
18	Tuross River Barrage	Needs to be reinstated to secure irrigation and stock water supply to the licence holders on the lower Tuross.
8	Reuse of reclaimed water	Treated water from Merimbula sewage should be utilized to support water reliability for agriculture before being dumped at sea. Should be implemented in conjunction with improved on farm water storage

The following options in the Draft Regional Water Strategy are very concerning for ongoing productive agriculture.

Option No	Title	Notes
1.	Pipeline from Brogo Dam to Bega Tathra town water supply system	This option would only be supported if it was implemented after the implementation of Option 20 increase in the capacity of Brogo dam.
2	A reserve volume for the Brogo Bermagui town water supply system	This option would only be supported if it was implemented after the implementation of Option 20 increase in the capacity of Brogo dam.
6	Pipeline connecting Bega Valley Shire Council and Eurobodalla Shire Council town water supply systems	This option would only be supported if it was implemented after the implementation of Option 20 increase in the capacity of Brogo dam. A cap on town water extraction would need to be implemented to protect allocation entitlements for general security licence holders.
12	Eurobodalla Southern Storage	Not supported if it does not include water supply for irrigators on the lower Tuross and

		implemented in conjunction with the Tuross Barrage.
23	Establish sustainable extraction limits for south coast surface water and groundwater sources	More information is required. Options associated with increased access to high flows and water storage would need to be implemented as a priority before consideration is given to changing entitlements
27	Merimbula Effluent Management Scheme	This is a major water source that could improve water reliability for agriculture enterprises in the Wolumla and Lochiel regions.
28	Fish friendly water extraction	Could be supported if the screens proposed do not impede on the operation and efficiency of the pump system
37	Shorten the Bega Brogo regulated river system	Not supported if the security of water entitlements for licence holders is affected. A pipeline could be an option for licence holders below the junction but water entitlements would need to be secured.

Thankyou for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours truly

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