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Subject: Submission to the Draft Border Rivers Regional Water Strategy

I strongly object to the Mole River Dam being presented as a Government commitment rather than an option. This has caused a bias in the draft Strategy.

A dam on the Mole River would damage one of the high conservation value aquatic ecosystems in the Border Rivers and capture natural flows that provide connectivity to wetlands and to the Barwon-Darling.

The Border Rivers system, of which the Mole is a tributary, is responsible for substantial flows downstream to numerous Darling communities who had serious water shortages during the drought. It has been an over-allocated system, and ecosystems, extractive users, and communities along the system and into the Darling would place great value on initiatives to increase water security and progressing towards the objectives outlined in the draft Strategy. Therefore, it is concerning to hear that some of the possible purposes of the Mole River Dam project are to provide in town water supplies to the towns of Stanthorpe, Tenterfield and Dundee and possibly provide economic opportunities for new industry development in and around Tenterfield. These are NOT downstream communities and taking water from an already strained system for new uses or town water supply in areas with no hydrological connection challenges environmental logic and represents potential for Government policy induced shifting of wealth and creation of winners and losers. Recycling waste water and storm water should be a priority for town water supplies.

A key missing option is to solve the problem of high evaporation rates from on-farm water storages. There are Australian products available to cover water surfaces or floating solar farms could provide a double benefit.

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