

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: [REDACTED]  
To: DPIE W Regional Water Strategies Mailbox  
Subject: Draft Macquarie-Castlereagh Regional Water Strategy

To whom it may concern.

I write this letter both as a concerned First Nations man and also [REDACTED] Cultural and Heritage committee of the Trangie Local Aboriginal Land Council.

The (Wuumbul/) Macquarie River Re-Regulating Structure proposal is ill conceived and if allowed to continue will further disconnect my people from their land, culture and heritage.

We as first nations people have been promised much and given little, your ears listen but your heart does not hear.

We are disconnected from our lands by your decisions and yet you demand a continuous connection to justify the meagre concessions we are offered.

Irrigated cotton has been a benefit to production and employment in the valley, but this comes at a cost to my people, my river, my country and my wildlife. Irrigation cleared my trees and levelled my land, it changed the course of my creeks and floodplains, it takes more and more water and its demands are never satisfied.

They poisoned the people and the land with toxic chemicals called "Defoliants" and told us that they were harmless, and you did nothing.

They sucked the water, the fish and the life out of my river, and gave fewer and fewer jobs in return. The profits of the wealthy stay with the wealthy and everything else suffers or dies.

The time has come to stand with Aboriginal people and tell the irrigators that at last, enough is enough, to say no to more water and more greed. My country was never ceded, my rights were never legally removed and I ask you now to honour your commitment to my people and stop this project before it gets any further.

The loss of any significant site is unacceptable to me and my people and we will lose much if this is built. The proposed construction site alone will erase any trace of my people, the people who lived in harmony with this land since the Dream Time, from their country.

In 2009 a report was prepared by Water Resources stating that the Macquarie river was "Over Developed".

(\* "Surface Water Management Area: Macquarie River - Regulated". Water resources - Overview - New South Wales. Australian Natural Resources Atlas. 13 May 2009).

Yet further extraction of between 14,500 ML (Andrew Lavelle, WaterNSW) to 25,000 ML (Tony Quigley, Macquarie River Food and Fibre on ABC radio) is proposed each year?

And it will not end there. In 2017 Macquarie River Food and Fibre presented to the "Inquiry into water use efficiency in Australian agriculture Submission 3" a plea to take even more water from my dying river.

We ask that you apply the "Improving recognition of Aboriginal people's water rights, interests and access to water" draft strategy, without

further delay. For the longest time you have promised a review of our Cultural Water access licence, the time has come to deliver it.

Make it stop!

Our climate is changing, your own reports say that less and less water will be captured by Burrendong dam each year.

And as the rain gets less who will loose out? The Irrigators or my country? Time will tell.

You must act now to prepare us for the future.

If the Gin Gin weir is at risk of collapse then replace it where it now sits with a fixed, more robust structure including a fish-way, but only to the height of the original wall.

If the taxpayer is to fund at least \$30 million, we should at least have a say on the outcome.

Flooding the most popular spot on the entire river to give irrigation an even larger slice of a dwindling resource is not an option.

Please listen.

Connecting the Wuumbul/Macquarie to the Darling/Baaka must happen to replenish our fish stocks. Fish-ways MUST be put on ALL the structures on the river, screens MUST be fitted to ALL pumps and the flow MUST go to the river first.

Irrigation is not the only industry in my valley and you need to stop acting as if it was.

Don't dam my river!

