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18 November 2023

Regional Water Strategies
Department of Planning, Industry & Environment
Locked Bag 5022
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
Email: regionalwater.strategies@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Lachlan Regional Water Strategy – challenges and shortlisted actions

Thank you for the opportunity for Central Tablelands Water (CTW) to provide support for the shortlist of proposed actions to be potentially implemented in the Lachlan region.

As background information, CTW is a County Council proclaimed in 1944 which currently provides quality drinking water to approximately 15,000 consumers in the local government areas of Blayney, Cabonne, Weddin, Cowra and Bland. An emergency bi-directional pipeline has also been commissioned linking CTW and Orange City Council water filtration plants to further assist in regional water security and resilience.

As CTW's water sources (i.e. Lake Rowlands and groundwater) are all located within the Lachlan Valley catchment, CTW supports the following three (3) priorities of the Lachlan Regional Water Strategy:

- **Priority 1: Build resilience to climate extremes**
- **Priority 2: Improve catchment health**
- **Priority 3: Support a strong and sustainable economy in a capped system**

As a regional water authority, traversing many local government boundaries, CTW has a strong connection with all three (3) priorities. As well as aligning with Priorities 4, 5 and 6 of the NSW Water Strategy; **increase resilience to changes in water availability (variability and climate change); support economic growth and resilient industries within a capped system; and support resilient, prosperous and liveable cities and towns.**

From a town water supply perspective, CTW supports the following proposed actions in the draft Lachlan Regional Water Strategy:

- **Priority 1: Build resilience to climate extremes**
 - **Action 1.1 – establish a coordination approach of involving all levels of Government, to implement local council and town water-related actions under Priority 1.** Comment: It is imperative that local water utilities have a

seat at the table to make decisions on the planning and management regarding extreme events (including droughts and floods) in their area of water supply.

- **Action 1.2 – support councils to improve flood risk management in the Lachlan region.** Comment: Enhanced support for local councils to improve flood risk management is a must. Also, local water utilities' water infrastructure needs to be recognised as essential public assets under the NSW Disaster Assistance Arrangements and Australian Government's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements eligibility list.
- **Action 1.5 – support groundwater use for towns and communities.** Comment: CTW relies on groundwater sources throughout its' supply network to supplement the surface supply from Lake Rowlands. This is extremely important during peak demand periods. A detailed review of how groundwater can support secure and reliable water access for towns in the Lachlan region is strongly supported.
- **Action 1.7 – investigate the need to further expand the regional water supply grid.** Comment: As a regional water authority traversing many local government boundaries, CTW supports the continued strategic planning, expansion and upgrades to the regional water grid. CTW is currently working in partnership with Cabonne Council, Orange City Council and DPE Water in the development of a Sub-Regional Town Water Supply Strategy. CTW is also a key stakeholder in the Centroc Water Grid Pipeline Project working in close collaboration with Parkes and Forbes Shire Councils. These projects also strongly align with the augmentation of Lake Rowlands, currently being considered under the Belubula Water Security Project.
- **Action 1.8 – Improve the understanding and management of groundwater resources in the Lachlan region.** Comment: This aligns with Action 1.5, with a detailed review of groundwater in the Lachlan region being strongly supported.
- **Action 1.9 – better integrate strategic land and water planning.** Comment: This is vital in assisting local water utilities with their strategic planning requirements (i.e. development of strategic business plans, long term financial plans, capital works program and asset management plans, etc).

- **Priority 2: Improve catchment health**
 - **Action 2.1 – reduce salinity and soil erosion in the Upper Lachlan and Belubula catchment.** Comment: As a local water utility, it is extremely important to protect the catchment and maintain the water quality for town water supply and the environment. By protecting the catchment and improving the health of the catchment, this in effect reduces the treatment processes required to treat the raw water to meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.
- **Priority 3: Support a strong and sustainable economy in a capped system**
 - **Action 3.1 – improve public access to climate information and water availability forecasts.** Comment: This action will assist local water utilities to better manage and plan for droughts and floods. For example, improved access to climate information will further assist local water utilities in their decision-making processes: to implement water restrictions during periods of drought; and share water with other interlinking local water utilities for critical human needs.
 - **Action 3.3 – undertake a climate impact study.** Comment: This action is supported and in particular, the climate impact on groundwater sources in the Lachlan region.

With inevitable future droughts and floods, increased storage in the Central West region is critical to meeting and managing future urban water supply demands. This increased storage will allow the capture of the high intensity variable rainfall events that are predicted in the future.

The Belubula Water Security Project Final Business Case is currently assessing both the Lake Rowlands to Carcoar Dam pipeline project and the Lake Rowlands Dam Augmentation project to improve the efficiency and resilience of water management within the Belubula Valley. Although the Final Business Case for the Belubula Water Security Project is being developed to align with the Lachlan Regional Water Strategy, it can also assist in water security and resilience for the upper Macquarie via the existing bi-directional pipeline between CTW and Orange City Council, and potential interlinking pipelines with Bathurst Regional Council and Cabonne Council at Molong.

The existing bi-directional pipeline between CTW and Orange City Council can also assist the Lachlan Valley with water security and resilience through the transfer of water from the Macquarie Valley as required.



CTW is a member of the NSW Water Directorate and holds associate membership with the Central NSW Joint Organisation and Local Government NSW. As a result of these memberships, CTW supports the submissions provided by these organisations for the development of the Lachlan Regional Water Strategy.

On behalf of CTW, we would like to thank DPE Water once again for providing CTW with the opportunity of contributing to the development of the Lachlan Regional Water Strategy.

Yours faithfully,

