

**Tamworth Water
Security Alliance**

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**SUBMISSION
Draft NSW State Water Strategy**

Tamworth Water Security Alliance represents community groups and individuals who support cost effective, diverse and sustainable water supply options for Tamworth Regional Council.

We are concerned that the draft State Water Strategy is on exhibition for community comment at the same time as the draft Namoi Regional Water Strategy. It is difficult to clearly understand how the two strategies relate to each other.

The draft State Water Strategy has a commendable first priority to *'Build community confidence and capacity through engagement, transparency and accountability'* which we fully endorse.

However, the Namoi Regional Water Strategy has as its first commitment, while all other projects are options, to construct a new Dungowan Dam & Pipeline. This commitment has been made with no business case or any other assessment or planning approval and very poor community consultation.

This flies in the face of the purpose of the draft State Water Plan to consider climate change predictions, Aboriginal cultural values and water rights, improve waterway and ecosystem health and have sustainable water resources.

It is imperative that the business case for the proposed Dungowan Dam is released to the community before final decisions are made on the project. Currently there is no information about who will own the dam, who will pay for the dam and who will benefit from the dam.

This project commitment in the draft Namoi Regional Water Strategy fails to meet the first priority of the draft State Water Strategy. It has failed to build community confidence in water planning and management in NSW.

Tamworth Water Security Alliance strongly supports that funding allocated to a new dam be redistributed to more cost effective and secure projects such as an advanced purified recycled water system for Tamworth Regional Council water supply.

All urban water supplies across regional NSW would benefit from immediate community education and pilot programs to demonstrate the safety and security of advanced purified recycled water.

This is the only way that we can protect our river systems from further degradation through unnecessary structures, such as dams and weirs, while providing a more secure source of drinking water under predicted drying climate scenarios.

The Namoi river system and water sharing arrangements are very complex. Water demand for irrigation, mining and other large industries is very high compared to water demand of urban populations.

The Namoi is a highly stressed system and cannot endure additional degradation through construction of more unnecessary larger dams. The lack of an up to date current condition report needs to be addressed urgently before any further impacts on the health of the Peel River or Namoi River are considered.

Tamworth Water Security Alliance supports that water availability and source is included in all planning decisions, so the mistakes of the past are not continued into the future. Because of poor past planning, we now have very narrow windows of opportunity to grow populations and economies, without destroying future water availability. This is critical when considering climate change predictions for the Namoi Region.

Building more dams is an old solution that does not meet the requirements for ecologically sustainable development and intergenerational equity.

We hope that the vision, objectives and priorities outlined in the draft State Water Strategy will be adopted and achieved over the next 20 years.

Yours sincerely

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On behalf of
Tamworth Water Security Alliance