

Submission: Lachlan Regional Water Strategy by [REDACTED]

This submission is in response to the second draft of the Lachlan Regional Water Strategy. Though I do not live in the area, I have been visiting the Cowra area for many years due to my involvement in the long running bird surveys for the Cowra Woodland Bird Program.

- I strongly support the removal of the Wyangala Dam Wall Raising Project from this strategy. Raising the dam wall will result in reduced river flows to the wetland and floodplains of the lower Lachlan River. This will have a big impact on bird populations, as there will be fewer opportunities for the birds to breed. Raising the dam wall will also result in inundation of woodland areas. Much of the woodland of the Lachlan area has already been cleared for agriculture. The remaining remnants should be preserved, not inundated or cleared.
- The main priority of this strategy should be the health of the river ecosystems and associated wetlands. We need healthy ecosystems underpinning the rural and general economy of the Lachlan catchment, as reflected in the NSW Water Management Act 2000.
- I strongly support the use of better management of water demand, so that available water is used sustainably. For example, more emphasis on water recycling for urban areas in the Lachlan area (and elsewhere) should be a priority.
- **I support actions 1.1 to 1.4.** Improved modelling and governance, more involvement of First Nations people and water efficiency measures are all welcome. **I do not support actions 1.5 and 1.7.** Drawing on groundwater to supply the needs of towns in the Lachlan and expanding pipelines is not sustainable. Again better use of demand management is needed, including better water efficiency measures.
- **I support Actions 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5.** Improving fish access, the review of the water efficiency project at Lake Brewster and better management of sedimentation in the river are all welcome initiatives. However, there is also a need to improve fish habitat between Wyangala and Forbes, by restoring deep pools for fish. **I do not support Action 2.3**, unless environmental impacts of any new weirs or upgrades to existing weirs are taken into account. If natural flows of water to the river are further disrupted, the breeding events of the birds of the Lachlan will be impacted.
- **I Support Actions 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5.** Improved access to climate information, a climate impact study, employment and business opportunities for First Nations people, and improved efficiency are all welcome initiatives. **I do not support Action 3.2**, unless all water use is included, especially irrigation and ground water extraction.
- **I Support Actions 4.1 – 4.3.** Groundwater assessment, review of floodplain management plans, integration of strategic land and water planning are all welcome initiatives.

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