

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [State Water Strategy Mailbox](#)  
**Subject:** SUBMISSION on Draft NSW WATER STRATEGY  
**Date:** [REDACTED]

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Please accept my submission.

## SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT NSW WATER STRATEGY

Water is our most precious resource and I applaud the vision of the strategy 'Sustainable water resources for thriving people, places and ecosystems, both now and for the future generations.'

### Rights of First Nations Peoples.

It is of paramount importance that First Nations People's water rights are restored. Australia in 2009 signed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People which states that Indigenous peoples have the right to water resources they traditionally owned.

First Nations People are the best people to respond to matters in Priority 2, after all, Australia's First Nations People have led the world in the response to COVID 19. A respectful, cooperative approach should be expected from the all including businesses, governments, landholders and the community when access is needed to cultural sites and water. Great value should be placed on First Nations Peoples' knowledge of water systems.

### Engagement, Transparency and Accountability.

Engagement, Transparency and Accountability are lacking in fast tracked Dam projects and this is illustrated by the proposed Dungowan Dam and Pipeline Project. This issue is of interest to me because I live in Tamworth and depend on the city's water supply.

This proposed project has no business case. The cost is unknown. The original cost was given as \$150 million which increased to \$484 million. However in a 'capital works document obtained by NSW Greens reveals the Planning Department's water division predicts the cost of the dam could balloon further, reaching as much as \$870 million. <https://amp.smh.com.au/environment/sustainability/viability-of-flawed-dungowan-dam-in-doubt-as-costs-blow-out-further-20210212-p5723k.html>

The Productivity Commission's Draft Water Report p171 used the proposed Dungowan Dam project as an example of flawed decision making for many reasons including having no rigorous cost benefit assessment.

There has been no up to date costing on

1. Increasing the safety rating of the existing 6.3 Gl Dungowan Dam which is owned and managed by the Tamworth Regional Council and is still in use.
2. Decommissioning of the present Dungowan Dam which is part of the project
3. The use of water from other sources such as Purified Recycled Water and greater use of grey water and storm water.
4. A new pipeline from the present Dungowan Dam to the Calala Treatment Works.

It is not known who will own, manage or pay for the proposed Dungowan Dam, or the cost of water from the dam.

This project is within a fully allocated water system however the NSW Water Minister only announced on 18/3/2021 that there would be no extra water allocations for Tamworth or for irrigators from this project. This should have been announced when the project was announced as not everyone is aware of the implications of a fully allocated water system. I have attended many webinars on this project and the question on allocations was constantly asked and no answers could be given. This proposed project is of great concern to many of us in the Tamworth area. The business case should be released before any further decisions are made.

The funding allocated to this project should be reallocated to projects which will use drought proof water sources such as Purified Recycled Water.

I do not support the fast tracking of Dams or Weirs .

There must be transparency of water allocations. Chaffey Dam near Tamworth released 60% of its' capacity in an 18mths period and Tamworth Water users were left in a precarious water security position. Chaffey Dam was at 95% capacity in late 2016 and was at a critical level in October 2018( Northern Daily Leader 18/10/2019). Water allocations must be on the public record and access to this information must be user friendly .

Engagement, Transparency and Accountability in all decisions are essential and would be of inestimable value.

#### Climate Change, Water Resilience and Water Sharing.

I support the emphasis on Climate Change and making water central to all developments. Water resilience will be essential to survival in extreme drought and extreme floods . I also support the collaboration between government departments to achieve this.

It will be necessary to have diverse options of water supply appropriate for each area.

Our water sharing plans must use the worst case drought scenario to inform decisions . Legal requirements under the NSW Water Management Act 2000 that prioritise environment and critical human needs must be met when sharing water and implementing water supply projects.

There should be no exemptions for water use by any industry, including mining, gas and irrigation.

It would be against the ideals of this strategy , indeed absurd to approve any new or extend any existing gas or coal projects. These projects not only use water and poison water but they produce greenhouse emissions which cause Climate Change. Climate Change causes decreasing stream flow, increasing soil dehydration and increased evaporation which results in decreasing amounts of available water.

#### Education, Research and Development

Education in water resilience is needed by industries. Industries in Tamworth use 50% of our drinking water supply.

Those in the agricultural sector also require education in water resilience. I feel that farmers should not receive drought funding if they do not practise drought resilient

measures e.g. regenerative agriculture or cell farming or whatever measure is appropriate to their enterprise.

Research and funding for all forms of water resilience is essential. Tamworth Regional Council did not have the funding to research the amount of water evaporative air conditioners were using .Some type of cooling is necessary when there are consecutive days over 40 degrees. It would have been useful to find out what is the most water wise cost effective type of household cooling.

Research into drought proof water sources should be given the highest priority not the lower priorities as shown in Section 5.2 b. and c. (p150) . It is imperative to have fully funded research into rainfall independent sources now as it will take some years between the research being completed and the purified recycled water being produced.

It would be useful to have a Centre of Excellence for Water, so that the regulations required for recycling storm water, grey water and industrial waste water and the production of purified recycled water could be easily ascertained.

It would be useful to have a fully funded mobile education unit equipped with appropriate resources for educating rural communities about water, the need for water sustainability and purified recycled water .

It would be useful to fund educational material for communities which already have water sustainability officers , and volunteers wanting to educate the community about water sustainability . This would be appreciated by those already on this journey and those who are about to begin.

I am happy to have my submission made public.

Thank you for the opportunity to write this submission.

Robyn Bird

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[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)