

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Macquarie-Castlereagh Region Water Strategy

NSW Government
Department of Planning Industry and the Environment - Water
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta, NSW 2124

By email: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SUBMISSION

Draft Macquarie-Castlereagh Regional Water Strategy

I was born in Dubbo, I have swum in, played on the banks and fished the Macquarie River all my life. I am involved with community groups in town and I'm a passionate OzFish member. I am a proud Wiradjuri man with a strong connection to country.

I have witnessed the death of the river, downstream of Warren, during the last drought. Burrendong Dam was all but empty and towns were running out of water. I support options that will increase efficiency and benefit the community.

The water resources in Burrendong dam are over allocated. This has been allowed to happen over 50 years by successive state governments and agencies. When Burrendong dam was completed in 1966/67 the yield of the dam was assessed as 406 Gigalitres (GL - a billion litres). The total allocation of regulated and supplementary flow water for the system is now around a total of 899 GL.

The draft strategy has predicted in 40 years inflows into Burrendong dam will halve. I believe this prediction is more likely to be the actual situation we find ourselves in, and that it's likely that scenario occurs well ahead of the 40 year timeline given. We need to use up to date modelling which includes the last 2 droughts and these predictions.

The Macquarie Re-regulator (commitment ?) is being proposed to allow more water to be removed from an already sick river. I see only one objective that this weir will meet, "Enable Economic Prosperity", and it is all about industry not community or environment.

The Murray Darling Basin Authority have undertaken a preliminary assessment of the project, and report:

"Possible environmental impacts on the environment included reduced flows to the Macquarie Marshes (a Ramsar listed wetland of international significance), stratification of the weir pool during summer, increased area of non-flowing habitat, habitat fragmentation, declines in nationally threatened fish species' populations, reduction of waterbird breeding habitat and death of riparian vegetation."

Government Commitment Access to water from Burrendong dam deep storage:
This project should not be presented at all. The considerations that are listed for the project on page 10 of the options document give all the reasons why pumping from the dead storage area of Burrendong is a bad idea.

Conclusion:

It is essential that the final regional water strategy focus on ways to reduce demand for water. Increasing populations and water dependent industries will have access to less water. Climate predictions are clear that supplies of water will be diminishing into the future, therefore the NSW Government must do all it can to curb demand.

Yours Sincerely

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