

# OBERON COUNCIL



22 November 2022

Dear Shagofta

## **Draft Regional Water Strategy – Macquarie-Castlereagh**

Please find following Oberon Council's submission to the Draft Regional Water Strategy.

Oberon sources its town water from the Oberon Dam Fish River Scheme (FRWSS) operated by Water NSW (WNSW).

The town of Oberon has endured significant uncertainty during both the Millennium and the most recent drought as to its water security particularly in relation to the secure yield requirements of the NSW Government. The supplier declined to provide the requested level of security advice. The FRWSS is the only source of water for Oberon and after the uncertainty of the Millennium Drought Oberon acquired a greater allocation from the Dam. This is however very expensive given the year to year town usage.

In the last month or so WNSW has advised that a preliminary 5/10/10 analysis has recently been done that indicated that in the last drought, absent the standing aside of Energy Australia that an insufficient 5/10/10 supply would have been provided to Oberon. This is potentially based on the reluctance of other WNSW customers to use water from the Duckmaloi source as otherwise provided under the FRWSS rules. It is noted that the FRWSS is required to undertake a strategic plan where the allocation to existing customers, the probable retirement of the Energy Australia take and its allocation with new and old customers as well as the operating rules of the scheme will need to be resolved.

Council is in the position of seeking an analysis of its secure yield using the guidance of the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) Interim Factsheet incorporating both the secure yield and stochastic modelling and risk assessment and has received a Safe and Secure grant to assist this. Recently WNSW has verbally agreed to co-operate in this modelling.

Council has also prepared a forward model of population growth which was accepted by DPE Water Utilities for another project which it intends to use in the yield modelling.



The RWS identifies that from a high level stochastic modelling assessment that the RWS has identified Oberon as having satisfactory water security.

It is noted that the RWS identifies the potential use of the Energy Australia allocation towards other uses. It is also noted that the Energy Australia allocation may be used for non town water supply or energy supply uses at Wallerawang and surrounds.

Council's submission is that it must have sufficient allocation from the FRWSS to meet the secure yield standard and stochastic modelling risk management requirements including growth, before any other new uses are considered or introduced into the scheme as it is the only water source for Oberon. Should sufficient and viable supply be available beyond that then it is acknowledged that the supply could assist other users as noted in the RWS.

To this end it is requested that the abovementioned yield studies be supported as a priority in the RWS.

It is also noted that the RWS identifies water quality issues for Oberon arising recently with a lengthy drought and heavy recharge since the end of the drought dragging manganese and iron particularly into the supply. Council is managing the manganese currently however the iron impact is proving difficult. Going forward a treatment plant assessment for a permanent capability to respond to high levels of iron and manganese will need to occur. As such Council supports the identification of water quality difficulties in Oberon in the RWS.

Should you require an additional information, please contact   


Kind regards  
