

**Murray Valley Groundwater Irrigators Association
(MVGIA) Inc
"West Tuppal"**



11 August 2022

Re Response to Draft NSW Groundwater Strategy

nsw.groundwaterstrategy@dpi.nsw.gov.au

To whom it may concern:

Reference is made to the Draft NSW Groundwater Strategy and on-line presentation Thursday 28 July 2022 at 12:30 where responses are as follows

Consultation – Computer system, was checked for capability and refreshed several times- where the attendee chat functionality was not working and there was no person to get in contact regarding this, where despite several phone calls and emails requesting to speak to the presenters it is disappointing, they have not been in contact with the MVGIA

Even though there were responses by the presenters to questions raised on the "on line chat"- this was simply talking by the presenters and no opportunity for a point of order to be raised when the answer to the question is not consistent with what was asked

The only way for this to be rectified is for there to be further meetings for people to ask questions verbally ideally in a public forum at a meeting located where the groundwater stakeholders are located- eg Deniliquin as many parties do not have computer access

The MVGIA considers only having 2 on-line presentations in late July and response required by 14 August 2022 grossly inadequate and a case of history repeating of poor consultation by the NSW government in relation to groundwater in the past including-

2007 (around this time) Deniliquin Golf Club Meeting- Vote on across the board cuts passed that was ignored

12 December 2018- Selective invitation to Corowa for Draft Lower Murray Groundwater Plan where presenter refused to discuss questions raised by the attendees and threatened to close the meeting and leave unless it was only the topics the presenter wanted to talk about

4 July 2019 Deniliquin RSL presentation- Only around 1 weeks' notice in the local paper videos playing and no opportunity to ask questions in public forum

MVGIA members consistent feed back in the above "token" consultation processes is that all Groundwater plans and strategies need to be paused until there is some credible peer reviewed science on sustainable recharge and extraction

Flawed Methodology– The entire premise of the strategy is regarded as flawed being “Top down” (page 17 of Draft Strategy) rather than “Bottom up”, where as clearly stated on page 46 of the Draft Strategy “Better information is needed to manage groundwater resources sustainably. and it is critical that we gather the right data with sufficient accuracy and use it in best practice models”

“The NSW Groundwater Strategy, Department of Planning and Environment- Water commissioned the CSIRO to assess the potential impacts of a drier climate on the ability of our groundwater resources to recharge... on the most extreme potential risks” (page 37 of Draft Strategy) is a grossly negligent approach if this is the only scenario considered as it does not meet the above “critical” test and is contrast with the approach in Victoria where in the Katunga region groundwater extraction capability was increased by the State Government Minister in August 2017 allowing for a wetter scenario, and is not consistent with action 1.2.4 in the NSW Draft Groundwater Strategy to “strengthen cross-border groundwater management”.

It is extremely premature for a “20 year blue print” (page 17 of draft strategy) to even be considered until such time the following occurs

- 1) Appropriate engagement, feedback opportunities and genuine consultation with Groundwater stakeholders where there is a history of this being grossly inadequate for over 15 years (refer above examples)
- 2) Comprehensive study based on sustainable recharge and extraction based on dry, wet and average climatic conditions to be made available for peer review over a reasonable time

Until parameters (1) and (2) can be met the MVGIA hereby submits a vote of NO CONFIDENCE in the process to make any changes to NSW Groundwater

The MVGIA welcome contact to work together on having a strategy that is fit for purpose

Yours Faithfully,

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]
MVGIA