

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: SUBMISSION - FNC Water Strategy

My name is [REDACTED] I have lived on a property about [REDACTED] km from The Channon, north of Lismore, for 34 years.

I acknowledge the work that the DPIE has done in the preparation of the Far North Coast Regional Water Strategy and I am pleased that the Strategy lists a large range of supply options. This is consistent with the recommendations of experts in the field, including the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology Sydney (ISF) and the Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA).

However, I am concerned that the Strategy's list of options and government commitments does not pay sufficient attention to demand management strategies. According to Dr Stuart White, the director of ISF, Rous County Council could delay for decades any need to implement new surface water supply options by implementing water efficiency programs in the region. Dr White and ISF have been involved in water efficiency programs for Sydney Water and water utilities in South East Queensland. These programs have dramatically reduced water consumption and reduced the pressure to find new supply sources in these jurisdictions. It is therefore disappointing to see that the Strategy's description of water efficiency options makes no mention of introducing major new water efficiency initiatives.

I am also concerned that one of the options listed in the Strategy is the proposed Dunoon Dam. This option is expensive, destructive and unnecessary, and the community consultation process associated with it has been tokenistic. While the community consultation process was in progress, the local water supply authority, Rous County Council, was lobbying the NSW government to provide finance for the dam.

The dam would destroy a significant portion of the region's remaining Big Scrub rainforest. Only one per cent of the North Coast's original Big Scrub remains, and it would be criminal to destroy any more of it. Rous County Council's suggestion that the loss of this forest could be 'offset' by starting a new forest elsewhere is so farcical that it deserves no further comment.

There are Indigenous heritage sites in the area that would be flooded by the dam. These sites are of great importance to the local Widjabal Wiyabal people, and the destruction of these sites against their wishes would be completely unacceptable.

The dam proposal does not even make sense even if one ignores the environmental and cultural objections. The WSAA, in its report, 'All options on the table: urban water supply options for Australia', states that dams are 'high risk investments as they rely on rainfall and are less resilient to climate change than other options'. In order to protect the region against the risk of running out of water during prolonged drought, Rous County Council needs to introduce a range of supply and demand options, including a significant proportion that are not dependent on rainfall.

I urge you to reject the proposal to build a large new dam in the Rous region.