

From: [REDACTED]
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Subject: SUBMISSION - FNC Water Strategy

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Just a bit of background, I am a film maker and journalist who has interviewed most of the key figures with strong opinions and expertise about the proposed Dunoon Dam and its alternatives, as well as walking and photographing the area to be inundated by the proposed dam.

I would like to thank the DPIE for its work on the Far North Coast Water Strategy. As someone who has lived self-sufficiently through drought in this area, I am well aware of the need to do something serious about the looming challenges.

I have come to the conclusion however that the Dunoon Dam is not a suitable solution to the problem, for the reasons outlined below.

Unlike most of the decision-makers, I have walked and photographed the entire length of the Rocky Creek area to be impacted by the proposed dam. Please have a look at these photo galleries to see these areas for yourself:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

If you're short of time, at least look at this highlights gallery:
[REDACTED]

and this film:
[REDACTED]

To condemn this area to be drowned without even looking at it or walking through it seems to me a highly unethical act. As you can see, it is a beautiful area and a vibrant and unique ecosystem.

The innumerable living things that call this valley home have not and will not be consulted. They don't deserve to die because of human greed and bad management.

I have also spoken to many of the key people from both sides of the debate as part of my work as a journalist, and researched the alternatives.

It's become clear that many of the people who would be most affected by this (including neighbours and Widjabul-Wyabul tradition owners) have not even been consulted, and have heard about this project via the media.

I have written a large number of stories about the Rous Future Water Project (which can be found here: [REDACTED]) but I think the most important ones are probably these two:
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Even Rous's own Chair Keith Williams has told me he would prefer not to build a dam if possible:
[REDACTED]

It is clear to me that the dam is not necessary or desirable for the reasons stated in the above two articles, as well as additional factors such as increased flood risk, sedimentation downstream, road risks with extra traffic and the negative carbon effects associated with the construction of the dam and the rotting and destruction of the forest.

My major additional point is that the growth argument underpinning this whole project is profoundly flawed. We are in the midst of a climate crisis and a pandemic, and have just lived through the worst bushfire season in Australia's history. All of these disasters have arisen because humans have not learned the hard lesson that infinite growth on a finite planet is impossible.

My own opinion is that composting toilets and water tanks should be far more common. The amount of water currently being wasted across these four council areas is staggering.

For details about the nature of this waste, and what can be done about it, please read Professor Stuart White's latest work on the subject, which deals directly with the Rous situation:
<https://drive.google.com/.../1knun42rhXOPuOgImBz.../view>
<https://drive.google.com/.../1F9WYqZ4IuyxMlj9JlJhl.../view>

If you're short of time, Annie Kia has also written about these issues here:
<http://anniekia.net/9-we-want-a-water-system-thats-fit.../>

We all have to learn to respect water more, and use less of it. It's perfectly possible to have a good life using much less than the 160 litres per person discussed by Rous. I know because I've done so for over ten years.

If people refuse to value water properly, it needs to be costed up until they do.

My final point is that Rous CC's statement that they have considered all the options is not true. There are great examples of other options in the stories above, and here is another one:
<https://www.zeromasswater.com/>

This technology is being rolled out all over the world, including massive installations behind the Gold Coast soon to be announced. I would strongly advise that you speak to them about how they could be part of the solution here on the Northern Rivers.

While this is not suitable as a replacement for bulk water, the idea of using one source of water for everything has had its day (in fact this way of thinking is an Ancient Roman-era concept). Renewable powered Zero Mass Water solutions can roll out community by community, as needed, to solve drinking water shortage issues, with minimal environmental impact, at a cost which is now competitive with other solutions. I have seen the technology in action at Murrurundi (which ran completely out of water in the last drought) and it works.

Having travelled all over Australia making environmental films with [REDACTED], I am well aware that this area of NSW, despite its challenges, is one of the wettest and most environmentally advanced areas of Australia. If we can't solve our water problems in the Northern Rivers without building more giant destructive dams, I really see no hope for the future of this country as the climate emergency worsens.

Let's show that a better way is possible.

Thanks for your considering this submission,

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[REDACTED]