

LACHLAN REGIONAL WATER STRATEGY

Submission to regionalwater.strategies@dpie.nsw.gov.au

The matters below are of concern to the NSW Bird Atlassers.

1. The most important objective of the Lachlan Regional Water Strategy must be to use available water in a sustainable manner.
2. Climate Change predictions are believed to become the norm according to Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO (13 Nov. 2020), with higher temperatures, more frequent and severe storm events, more frequent bushfires. and lower winter and spring inflows.
3. Raising the Wyangala Dam wall will lead to a further deterioration in the already poor health of the river.
 4. Available water in the Lachlan is over-allocated; addressing this problem will change any perceived need for more storage and the severe effects it will have especially on wetlands and swamps of the lower reaches, e.g. Booligal Swamp and Great Cumbungi Swamp.
5. Important natural flows will be captured, these flows are essential to the breeding cycle of endangered Murray Cod and ecosystem function.
6. Enormous water savings can be obtained by planning to fix leaky weirs in the Jemalong Irrigation District. This has been an issue for many years, now is the time to start!
7. For the Regional Water Strategy to achieve improved outcomes for the health of the river, native fish, waterbirds and wetlands the following must be targeted:
 - * Option 11: address cold water pollution from Wyangala
 - * Option 14: install fishways in any weirs below the dam and work towards a fishway in current dam;
 - * Option 15: environmental water must be actively protected and not used for any other purpose;
 - * Option 16: improvements to water quality can help to be achieved by addressing over-allocation and over-extraction;
 - * Option 17: restore floodplains by banning floodplain harvesting; floodplains are the means of maintaining river health, refreshing the recharge zone, recycling organic matter, are only two examples. Many chapters have been written on this subject which must be re-visited for inclusion in any new strategy;

* Option 21,22 & 23: sustainable access to groundwater is failing, it must be a priority for the strategy to address.

8. NSW Bird Atlassers are most supportive of Aboriginal needs to secure flows for cultural sites and other needs; and for the River Ranger program.

9. All towns relying on river water must be aware of the finite nature of their supply and be prepared for water restrictions earlier rather than later.

* Option 9: Reuse, recycle and, with qualifications, stormwater harvesting.

10. Environmental outcomes cannot be achieved by

* Option 3: increasing the size of Lake Rowlands Dam;

* Option 27: changes to Lake Cargelligo

* Option 39: more weirs in Lower Lachlan

All of these are counter to good environmental outcomes and may be assessed as a Key Threatening Process.

Yours sincerely

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NSW Bird Atlassers

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