

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: [REDACTED]
To: DPIE W Regional Water Strategies Mailbox
Cc: Melinda Pavey MP
Subject: SUBMISSION - FNC NSW Water Strategy.
Attachments: signature.asc

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TO:
Department of Planning,
Industry and Environment,
Locked Bag 5022,
Parramatta NSW 2124,
regionalwater.strategies@dpie.nsw.gov.au

Dear DPIE Delegate,

Re: SUBMISSION - FNC NSW
Water Strategy.

Firstly I would like to congratulate the DPIE for the draft Far North Coast Water Strategy. As someone new to the science and engineering of a Regional Water Grid, it appears to be broadminded with apt consideration given to the cultural, meteorological and sustainability contexts of water supply into the future.

I am a medical doctor running a solo rural private practice, and a property owner at the address of the proposed Dunoon Dam. Over the past 50 years my family have enjoyed managing an ecologically sustainable property that actually lies within the proposed inundation site.

The property is an approximately 160 hectare admix of cattle grazing, nut orchards and fenced rainforest regeneration. I am passionate about protecting the Subtropical Rainforest, Wet Sclerophyll Forest, and Riparian Lowlands Rainforest which are prolific along the 6kms of streams and creek frontage on our lands. These are DPIE-recognised high biological diversity zones with hundreds of thousands of native birds and animals.

I also have many ongoing projects on the property in wetlands and catchment management, keyline dam and swale development, creek-bank restoration, and fish habitat improvement. Having linked to the Whian Whian Landcare Group, Friends of the Koala and Widjabul-Waibul stakeholders, I have also been supported to commence Cultural Burning of grasslands, Eucalyptus Koala-Corridor plantings; and Indigenous Re-Connection to Country-and-Water activities.

I only recently become aware of the prehistoric Aboriginal Sacred Burial Sites with their archaeologically unique stone cairns adjacent to my property. This is within an area of Rocky Creek which my family had described to friends for decades as "our sacred gorge". Words therefore cannot describe my deep appreciation for this land and sadness at its potential loss.

I therefore strongly oppose the inclusion of the Dunoon Dam in the FNC Water Strategy, yet this is far from an "Not In My Back Yard" submission. In fact, while

waterfront views would significantly improve the financial value of my home, ethically and environmentally I must stand with the 91% of the FNC Community against a Dunoon Dam in strenuously opposition.

I primarily understand that the Dunoon Dam was found UN-VIABLE in 2013 based on its failure on four (4) EIS reports -- Aquatic, Terrestrial, Cultural and Geological. It only passed on the Financial assessment based on a flawed calculus which assumed the gross 50 GigaLitres (not 4-7 GL) would be used each year.

The details of the above reports are available on the Rous NR website, though not easily found. They are also reproduced on the WaterNorthernRivers.com activists' website, along with critiques as to their serious scientific flaws and limitations. I am a regular reviewer and contributor to this website, along with several dozen others who are far more engineeringly and scientifically credentialed. I therefore request that the contents of the website (WaterNorthernRivers.com) be taken as Appendix A to this submission, as I fully endorse their ethically based practices of cultural sensitivity, support for biodiversity, open communication, non-violence, apolitical stance, sustainable growth and sound scientific reasoning.

There is also a growing library of evidence on the site, from dozens of biologists and hydro-engineers who oppose a Dunoon Dam, based on the extinction threats to a 150 million year old Endangered Ecological Rainforest Community (EEC) and its endangered biodiversity; and the poor cost-benefit and low water security offered by a rain-dependent monolith. A future in harmony with nature must entail fully scalable water-for-humans options such as automated rain-tank top-ups, and Purified Recycled Water from our plentiful rivers and stormwater collections on the urban footprint. These and many more smarter water options are described on the WaterNorthernRivers.com website.

A Dunoon Dam would also extinguish all of the endangered Eastern Freshwater Cod's Rocky Creek habitat. This Cod has a small but persistent population in Rocky Creek which was minimized in the 2011 Aquatic ecology study, and overlooked in the Hydrosphere Consulting 2020 Integrated Water Cycle Management Development: Assessment of Augmentation Scenarios. The existing NSW DPI Eastern Freshwater Cod Recovery Plan aims to restore this species and the plan depends on protecting diverse habitats and natural creek flows. (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/fish-species/endangered-species/eastern-freshwater-cod>). Another 16 native fish species are also threatened by a significant and permanent loss of this 17.5 kms of habitat, including the endangered Oxleyan Pygmy Perch and Purple Spotted Gudgeon (2011 Rous Aquatic Survey).

I therefore oppose the Dunoon Dam's inclusion based on the Indigenous Cultural significance, Terrestrial ecology, Aquatic ecology, Geological concerns, lack of Social License and on Financial grounds.

Surprisingly, many conservative friends and locals spontaneously make candid statements that they are "ready to blockade" any progress on a dam. It is after all, a region that has attracted people for years who have a deep respect for the natural beauty and underlying ecology of the region's jewels. The Whian Whian and The Channon gorges are some of those remnant gems, and I get the strong impression that this will become a deeply divisive issue within our community and battlegrounds if pressed.

Lastly, I must express my annoyance for having to spend over a hundred hours in researching and promoting environmentally sustainable 21st Century water management. Is this not the role of our local water authority? This has been at the cost of attending to a demanding rural medical practice, continuing my professional development, spending reasonable time with my young family, planting trees,

caring for my property, orchards and animals, and teaching my Indigenous friend's kids about the land. Also competing for my time during this period has been bushfire training and preparations; and pandemic training and business modifications. I understand my sacrifices and the choices, however the cynical approach of Rous Council in lobbying for Dunoon Dam funding a whole year in advance of the public consultation beggars belief. This was in full knowledge of the flaws in that option, and the doubly cynical proffering of "offsets" towards another Cultural annihilation and multiple EEC extinctions.

Finally, as a more general observation, it is alarming to become aware of the predatory nature of our capitalist system, in that money unchecked, naturally seeks to extract a rent from every last drop of natural resources. I believe that the ultimate forces able to resist the destruction of our environmental Life-Supports and Cultural Heritage, are the highest powers of our State and Federal Legislature.

Yours sincerely,

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Appendix A:

Water Northern Rivers: <https://waternorthernrivers.org/>