

Submission to NRC review into the Macquarie Cudgegong regulated water sharing plan 2025

Please consider my comments in regard to the review.

Our family has lived in and run our business in the Macquarie marshes for 4 generations.

We have been included in the development of water policy for the last 39 years and have a strong interest in a robust and transparent plan that dictates the sharing of flows.

Our family run a beef cattle grazing business and part of our property is listed under the Ramsar convention (U Block) ,we also have an interest in tourism and have an active irrigation licence in the unregulated section of the Lower Macquarie.

I have sat on the Environmental water advisory panel for 16 years as a landholder representative and sat for 4 years on the stakeholder advisory panel for the remake of the 2004 water sharing plan that led to the formation of the 2016 plan.

The management of flows in the Macquarie is still influenced by a large irrigation industry that I believe have historically had a bias towards water extraction at the expense of other demands .This has led to the demise of the Macquarie Marshes and the loss of connectivity to the Barwon .These connection flows are critical as the Macquarie is a winter /spring fed catchment in the Northern basin providing flows to the Barwon Darling at a time when the other northern fed streams are not providing flows.

My comments regarding the Macquarie Cudgegong WSP

I fully support the Environmental flow advisory group EWAG.

I support the current environmental water allocation (EWA) and would like to see this water being given higher priority then general security .

I have real concerns that because of floodplain harvesting licences being issued that more water will be removed from an already over allocated system then before the take was licenced.

The fight for a cap on supplementary access was long and exhausting, now with the licensing of overland flows the whole idea of supplementary flow limits and the compromises made to reach agreement have become irrelevant.

The plan fails to clearly describe the base flows in the regulated reach, as water is in such high demand the river operator (water NSW) has constant pressure to become more efficient. This action at times results in the regulated reach experience ever increasing periods of low or no flows.

The plan should be specific about why the regulated reach of the Macquarie River must not stop and have clear actions to prevent this continuing to occur.

Planned environmental water (PEW)

During the life of the current plan there has been a continued erosion of PEW.

This must be identified and then addressed, the current NSW government is looking into improving water security in the system and a proposal is to raise the supply full level of Burrendong dam. This would have significant impact on flows to the Macquarie Marshes, the

connectivity with the Barwon/Darling and directly reducing flows to the effluent creeks on the western side of the Macquarie below Warren.

Some other examples of erosion of PEW are the issuing of floodplain harvesting licences increasing use of tributary flows in the river to fill existing orders, the continued policy by water NSW to put the irrigation industry before the environmental flows by doing dam /valve repairs during the non-irrigation period.

In summery my points are.

The current EWAG works well.

I support the rules around EWA.

The licencing of floodplain harvesting will result in increased take in the Macquarie.

Erosion of base flows by the river operator.

Continued erosion of PEW.

Please contact me if you require more information

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