



29th June 2020

Submission to Review of Tweed River Area Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2010

The Caldera Environment Centre is a volunteer environment group based in Murwillumbah for over 30 years and actively working to support positive environmental outcomes.

On the NRC website it states that the “the purpose of the water sharing plans is to prescribe how water is managed firstly to provide for the environment and also to support social and economic outcomes.” CEC believes that the emphasis on the environment taking precedence is the right one and should drive the solutions to achieve social and economic benefits. With an increasingly unstable climate this is even more critical. We will need to adapt not continue to exploit our natural resources in an unsustainable way.

With that in mind CEC especially would like to see the moratorium on the Byrrill Creek dam maintained within the Tweed water sharing plan protecting vital habitat. The Byrrill Creek catchment and riparian zones are of the highest conservation value in the shire. The creek includes the highest conservation value riparian vegetation within the shire being in excellent condition at several location and includes rocky creek banks and large freshwater pool where Platypus can be observed. The catchment includes numerous threatened species, 42 priority flora species and 37 priority fauna species, 3 endangered Ecological Communities. The adjoining Wollumbin and Mebbin National Parks could be severely impacted if the dam proposal proceeded. The proposed dam site includes numerous Aboriginal Cultural Heritage sites.

Council has already resolved to increase the capacity of the Clarrie Hall Dam which will meet future needs to 2032. Studies and land acquisition has proceeded to raise the wall at the dam. There are other alternatives too to increase capacity that make more use of this precious resource – storm and rainwater water harvesting and using recycled water for non potable uses.

CEC believes there is a lack of credible data on water storage and groundwater supplies which needs to be remedied to make decisions on allowable extraction. During the recent drought the issue of self regulated water access demonstrated the need to have monitoring

in place and restricting extraction in dry times. It's the low flow events that stress the system and putting the health of the environment first is paramount. Regular releases of water from the Clarrie Hall dam to maintain river health should be maintained both for environmental outcomes and for human health.

CEC would like to see more emphasis on dealing with demand and innovative solutions that don't rely on sacrificing the natural values of our environment.

CEC supports the 20 year moratorium that bans any dam proposal at Byrrill Creek until 16 May 2032.

Yours sincerely

Cynthia Brook
Secretary
Caldera Environment Centre