

LAND RELEASE AND HOUSING SUPPLY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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The Chair
Committee on Environment and Planning
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

Inquiry into land release and housing supply in NSW

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the inquiry into land release and housing supply in NSW.

WaterNSW is a State-Owned Corporation established on 1 January under the *Water NSW Act 2014*. The principal objectives of WaterNSW include the capture and supply of quality bulk water, the management and protection of the declared catchment area, and the provision and management of water supply infrastructure. WaterNSW:

- supplies two thirds of water used in NSW from 42 dams, rivers and pipelines to regional towns, irrigators, Sydney Water Corporation and local water utilities
- owns and operates the largest surface and groundwater monitoring network in the southern hemisphere and builds, maintains and operates essential infrastructure
- promotes improvements in achievable water quality standards and contributes to the protection of public health and the environment through enhanced catchment protection practices in declared catchments.

The Inquiry into land release and housing supply in NSW raises three matters of particular interest for WaterNSW:

1. Increasing urbanisation, particularly in western and south-western Sydney, have resulted in increased pressure on the integrity of critical water supply infrastructure, namely the Warragamba Pipelines and the Upper Canal. The Upper Canal in particular is vulnerable to impacts due to its age and fragility. The Upper Canal is also listed on the State Heritage Register.

Subdivision for housing supply and industrial developments, and their associated infrastructure directly adjacent to, as well as over and under the Pipelines and Canal, have already resulted in impacts to the water quality and land corridor containing the infrastructure. Land release and housing supply decisions should consider the cumulative impacts on these critical infrastructure corridors. Potential replacement of the Upper Canal should also be taken into consideration.

These corridors are also Controlled Areas under the *Water NSW Regulation 2013*, and public access is currently prohibited. It is critical the security and integrity of the Controlled Areas are maintained in order to maintain supply to more than 60% of the State's population, and that the current zoning of SP2 Infrastructure is retained.

2. Listed functions of WaterNSW under the *Water NSW Act 2014* are to protect and enhance the quality and quantity of water in declared catchment areas, and to manage and protect declared catchment areas. At this stage the only declared catchment area is the Sydney catchment area. It is proving increasingly challenging to achieve these functions within the Sydney catchment area due to increasing urban development, and associated pressures resulting from intensification of land uses, and increased runoff and pollutants.
3. Increasing population, particularly in the Sydney metropolitan area, places pressure on the water supply system. This in turn may lead to a need for augmentation of the water supply and associated infrastructure system. For these reasons WaterNSW is examining augmentation strategies for an enhanced water supply system.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact [REDACTED], Manager Catchment Protection, on [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

FIONA SMITH
Executive Manager Water and Catchment Protection