

**Submission
No 34**

INQUIRY INTO WATER AUGMENTATION

Name: Ms Margaret Hilder

Date received: 10 August 2016

As a concerned citizen, a Central West smallholder and a trained geologist, I am writing to oppose the proposed damming of the Belubula River, for the following reasons: 1. the unique geological value of this extensive and unspoiled cave system, which has formations and fossils, some unique to this area, reaching back at least to the Ordovician Period, as well as sediments that provide valuable information about past environments and climates: these could provide many opportunities for research which would be lost to flooding if the river were to be dammed; 2. likely damage to environmental flows into the (already over-allocated) Lachlan River and downstream wetlands, the latter being the subject of an international agreement by the Australian Government to protect certain migratory bird species; 3. detrimental effects on downstream water users, including a reduction in water flows; further, if private enterprise is to be a beneficiary (as was proposed by the Federal Government's Water Infrastructure Ministerial Working Group in 2014) it is likely that water prices for local water users would increase. For these reasons I submit that this proposal is inappropriate and potentially very damaging, and that a full range of other alternatives for enhancing the availability of water in this region should be considered and examined. Thank you for the opportunity to express my views.