

**Submission  
No 67**

**INQUIRY INTO RATIONALE FOR, AND IMPACTS OF,  
NEW DAMS AND OTHER WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN  
NSW**

**Organisation:** Wentworth Shire Council

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Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC  
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Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment  
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Dear Ms Faehrmann

**INQUIRY INTO THE RATIONALE FOR, AND IMPACTS OF, NEW DAMS AND OTHER WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN NSW**

On behalf of Wentworth Shire Council, I thank the Committee for the opportunity to make a submission regarding the abovementioned inquiry. I authorise for Council's submission to be published in full and on the website.

In responding to the inquiry, it should be read in the context of the most recent drought is still impacting large parts of NSW and questionable management and impacts of reduced inflows from the northern basin sees the need for improved water storage and management of the system including the lower Darling connectivity to the northern basin.

The Darling River has suffered 17 cease to flow events since 2001. Prior to 2001, the last time the Darling River stopped flowing was in 1945. The most recent cease to flow event seen unprecedented reduced inflows causing multiple native fish kills, trauma and stress among local communities, and the end of irrigation dependent industry in the lower Darling. Our town of Pooncarie suffered social and economic harm due to no water available from the Darling River. The installation of 3 bores seen essential water only being provided to the residents.

Commentary will now be provided in relation to the areas of interest as nominated within the terms of reference.

a) The need for projects, including the historical allocation of water and consideration of other options for ensuring water security in inland regions,

Having consideration to the preamble above which in the opinion of the author clearly demonstrates the need for the projects. The capture of water inland by preference to allowing gigalitres to flow into the South Australian lower lakes is a must for the future social and economic viability of inland NSW.

b) The economic rationale and business case of each of the projects, including funding, projected revenue, and the allocation and pricing of water from projects,

This statement suggests that this stage is to assess the strategic context for the project and to demonstrate how it provides synergy and holistic fit with other programmes and projects. The reality is that this is about water infrastructure which is some remote rural communities may not deliver the threshold of benefit as set by some government body parameters. Water security for remote and rural must be considered outside those parameters.

c) The environment cultural, social and economic impacts of the projects, including their impact on any national or state water agreements, or international environmental obligations,

This point of consideration is written with the assumption that water agreements are delivering the optimal outcomes for all stakeholders. As recently as last month the Menindee Sustainable Diversion Adjustment Mechanism project stakeholder has reached a point of impasse based on the fact that the whole of river connectivity has not been addressed. This point is made highlighting the fact that water agreements generally are not delivering wholistic environment cultural, social and economic outcomes.

d) The impacts of climate change on inland waterways, including future projections, and the role of dams and other mass water storage projects in ensuring security of water supply for social. Economic and environmental outcomes. Public infrastructure is central to sustainable development through its ability to bring both direct and indirect economic, social, and environmental benefits to society. Water infrastructure plays a critical role in shaping urban environments, contributing to the prosperity of communities across the globe with benefits across health, safety, productivity and environmental domains. It is critical to building resilience as part of climate change mitigation and adaption.

e) Water infrastructure technologies that may promote enhanced environmental outcomes, Benefits assessment for infrastructure investments should align with broader policy directions and include considerations of benefit for the wider community, beyond the boundaries of the infrastructure provider. A deeper understanding of value may be gained through working with a range of stakeholders including the end users of infrastructure. In looking toward the future it is imperative that any projects deliver on these key aspects of design. They must be innovative using the latest technology to deliver water for all aspects of life.

Should you require any clarification of the content of this letter please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the General Manager

Yours sincerely

KEN ROSS  
GENERAL MANAGER