

Submission
No 142

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

Organisation: NSW Farmers Association

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James Jackson
President

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Portfolio Committee No. 7 - Planning and Environment
Legislative Council
New South Wales Parliament
Via Email: portfoliocommittee7@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Portfolio Committee No. 7 - Planning and Environment

RE: Rationale for, and impacts of, new dams and other water infrastructure in NSW

NSW Farmers Association (NSW Farmers) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment to the Inquiry into the rationale for, and impacts of, new dams and other water infrastructure in New South Wales proposed by WaterNSW including Wyangala, Mole River and Dungowan Dam projects, the Macquarie River reregulating storage project and the Western Weirs project.

NSW Farmers is Australia's largest state farming organisation, representing the majority of commercial farm businesses in New South Wales, ranging from broadacre livestock, dairy, wool and grain producers, to more specialised producers in the horticulture, egg, pork, oyster and goat industries.

NSW Farmers policy supports the construction of dams, in a strategic manner for town water needs, stock and domestic water, irrigation, primary production, community needs, electricity production and mutually beneficial outcomes. With a changing climate trending towards less frequent rainfall, dams and other mass water storages would assist in ensuring the security of water supply for a range of uses and social, economic and environmental outcomes. Enhanced water storages will assist in water security through the opportunity to capture and store more water during large rainfall events for use in times of water shortages.

NSW Farmers understands the need for improved water storages for water security, however our members are concerned by the lack of information, consultation and engagement prior to the above proposed projects being announced as 'shovel ready'. Details of the proposals, environmental impact studies and benefit-cost analysis (including the impact on existing infrastructure and current land use practices) have not been made available for comment. NSW Farmers would like to see detailed business cases and improved consultation and engagement with local communities.

Due to the lack of detailed publically available information regarding the proposed projects, potential pricing and allocation impacts resulting from the projects and interactions with state water agreements or international environmental obligations has not yet been disclosed. The proposed projects and improved water management is in the public interest of all water users (urban, productive and environmental), therefore NSW Farmers would like to see the cost of these proposed projects shared equally. Additionally, the proposed projects should work within existing state water agreements or international environmental obligations. Beneficial first flush flows and the accrual and timing of allocations should also not be impacted. NSW Farmers encourages the government to genuinely consult with the local communities and water users regarding water management arrangements for the proposed projects.

NSW Farmers' Association

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NSW Farmers appreciates the opportunity to provide comment to the Inquiry into the rationale for, and impacts of, new dams and other water infrastructure in New South Wales. NSW Farmers policy supports the construction of dams, for a number mutually beneficial outcomes including town, agricultural and environmental uses. NSW Farmers also seeks that the government releases detailed business cases for the proposed projects and undertakes genuine consultation and engagement with local communities and water users. In addition to the construction of dams and other mass water storages, other options and technologies should be considered that further enhance water storage and environmental outcomes. NSW Farmers are happy to provide further information about the issues raised in this submission, if this would be helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

James Jackson
PRESIDENT

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