

**Submission
No 159**

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

Name: Mrs Rosemary Hadaway

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Submission:

Inquiry into the rationale for, and impacts of, new dams and other water infrastructure in NSW

With regard to: Macquarie River reregulating storage project.

Cudgegong River: Macquarie River Tributary above Burrendong Dam

The Cudgegong River is a tributary of the Macquarie River and its headwaters are captured in Windamere Dam. It then flows to Burrendong Dam where it joins the Macquarie.

The environmental water allowance from the Cudgegong is not guaranteed beyond Burrendong Dam. This is not appropriate. This allowance must be maintained beyond Burrendong Dam, and not taken by extractive licences. The current system means that general security licence holders are accessing environmental flows. This situation must be addressed, and environmental flows must be fully protected. I object to an increase in general security licences below Burrendong Dam – these licence allocations are already using environmental water. If these licences are to be increased, that would necessitate more water being available...how will that happen?...is it going to rain more in the future?

To decrease the effects of drought and reduced river flow, activities such as regenerative agriculture, designed to hold water in the landscape, are more logical approaches to land management that must be implemented in the future.

Macquarie River

The inflows below Burrendong Dam are needed for a healthy river and all its dependant flora and fauna. The proposal to increase the water impoundment at Gin Gin is contrary to all river-health dynamics.

It is incumbent on all Australian governments to protect internationally recognised sites of any kind. This means that the Macquarie Marshes as a RAMSAR site, must have adequate and appropriate inflow protected by enforceable and monitored regulations. As the Marshes have already declined due to changes in flow regimes... *'A notification of likely change in ecological character of the Macquarie Marshes Ramsar site was submitted to the Ramsar Secretary General on 17 July 2009 under Article 3.2 of the Ramsar Convention. This change can best be described as a 'likely change' from a semi-permanent wetland system to an ephemeral wetland system in parts of the Ramsar site.*

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/macquarie-marshes-ramsar-site-response-strategy> ' ... it is not possible to take more water from the Macquarie River. If such an action occurred it would be unethical and potentially lead to a collapse of this unique ecosystem.

Native fish require diverse habitats including riffle zones and snags. They also frequently require many kilometres of natural river length for their lifecycles. The proposal at Gin Gin with a 30km long pool of still water will not provide this. There will be no suitable vegetation or habitat in such a situation. All impoundments on the Macquarie River must have a suitable fishway installed as a compulsory appropriately integrated design element.

A registered Aboriginal site 20km upstream from the proposed reregulating weir at Gin Gin has been identified. It would be inundated by the weir pool should the project go ahead. It is likely that similar sites exist at other locations along the River and across the landscape. This destruction of cultural heritage must not occur. We are diminished by such lack of respect.

I believe the Macquarie River reregulating storage project should not proceed. The Gin Gin weir must be repaired and not height increased, and the promised fishway implemented.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Hadaway