

INQUIRY INTO FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 11 August 2021

Partially
Confidential

Dear Chair,

As an irrigator in the Gwydir Valley, who doesn't floodplain harvest, I am dismayed at the injustice that my supplementary licence has been reduced to offset another form of take, floodplain harvesting, which is unmanaged.

This was enabled by the disallowance of regulations to licence, manage and meter floodplain harvesting back in May 2021.

I have followed the rules as have other irrigators, and now it seems the NSW Government and the NSW Legislative Council are throwing us all under the bus.

I am not a lawyer, but if floodplain harvesting was illegal, why then has the Minister reduced my supplementary water?

Clearly, there is evidence to support it as a historical form of take and I do not have an issue with it. It is an important source of water for some irrigators and the environment in our region during times of plenty, when it floods.

It's just that I've had my water availability reduced because others access water from the floodplain, and no one has set rules for it yet.

My business should not have to operate with less water because some in the NSW Parliament have a conspiracy about the National Party and don't want to be seen to be helping irrigators.

These proposed new rules and restrictions have been removed in a time when our rivers are full and flowing and we are at more chance of a flood, than a drought.

My business cannot wait years for you to sort this out.

This has meant...I have had to reduce my summer planting because of this debacle, at a time when I should be able to get back to my maximum production after three years of the worst drought. It will impact my businesses recovery from the drought and likely make me less prepared for the next one if this continues.

Also, the rainfall runoff regulation meant that I could continue to operate my farm as designed for best practice and to meet environmental obligations, that aim to keep rainfall runoff from cultivated fields on the farm. The rainfall runoff regulation would mean I do not need to be a floodplain harvester.

I do not consider myself a floodplain harvester. I am an irrigator, who has expertly designed, and precision developed my irrigated land to capture my excess irrigation water and rainfall runoff within my farm, and thus avoid releasing potentially contaminated water back into our rivers. The regulation clearly enabled me to continue that historical practice as an exemption without the need for excessive regulation or cost.

I support that all major water take for irrigation should be licenced, metered, and reported to Government and our community. This obviously must include floodplain harvesting.

It's a logical and simple solution, license, limit and meter floodplain harvesting, so other water users with supplementary licences aren't impacted in the meantime. Urgently, now, not in two years, or another 20-years.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this confidential submission.

Yours sincerely,

Gwydir Water User

Moree NSW