

**Submission  
No 235**

## **INQUIRY INTO FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING**

**Organisation:** Warren Shire Council

**Date Received:** 27 August 2021

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## *Office of the Mayor*

The Hon. Cate Faehrmann MLC  
Chair, Select Committee on Floodplain Harvesting  
Upper House Committees  
Legislative Council  
Parliament of New South Wales

Email: [floodplainharvesting@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:floodplainharvesting@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

26th August 2021

Dear Madam,

**Re: Warren Shire Council Submission to the Inquiry into Floodplain Harvesting**

Thank you for the opportunity for Warren Shire Council to provide a submission to the Inquiry into Floodplain Harvesting. Please note that Council's Submission may be published in full on the relevant website including our names.

### **Submission**

To put the situation in context, the Warren Shire Council area was one of the most economically and socially affected Local Government Areas in Australia with the buy-back of water for the Murray-Darling Basin Water Buy-Back Scheme of the Commonwealth Government. This buy-back scheme when coupled with the drought at the time, severely damaged the economy and social fabric of the Warren Shire.

Warren Shire Council strongly supports the regulation and licencing of Floodplain Harvesting (FPH) and regulation of Rainfall Runoff (RRO).

The Irrigation Industry is a large economic and social benefit to the Warren Shire, while at the same time the community is extremely proud of the Macquarie Marshes and what they signify environmentally. The potential tourism is still to be realised from this unique Ramsar listed site. Much Government funding has been received to support the development of tourism and this is hoped to be continued.

FPH needs to be consistent with other forms of access. It needs to be accountably reported and metered. Including it in the 1994 Cap or Long Term Annual Average Extraction Limit will give surety to the Irrigation Industry and yet will return water to the environment.

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We understand that the modelling and science shows that the reforms will have positive outcomes. By returning water to the environment this will benefit water birds, native vegetation and native fish. We understand this transfer of water to the environment from industry to be the biggest since the Macquarie-Darling Basin Plan.

Council has also been advised that during the extensive floods of the Macquarie River in 2016, if the regulation and licencing of FPH had been enacted, the amount of water harvested would have been equivalent to less than 1% of the flood flows of the Macquarie River at the time and would have had negligible effect on water flowing to the Macquarie Marshes and further downstream into the Murray-Darling Basin. However, the improvement to the economy and social fabric in the Warren Shire of producers of food and fibre having improved access to floodplain harvested water, would have been considered most favourable for a number of seasons.

FPH is certainly needed in our community. We feel licencing and metering is essential, it gives Government a tool to manage and enforce compliance and ensures water is shared according to agreed established limits.

RRO should also continue as it prevents potentially contaminated runoff into streams and is in line with environmental obligations.

Council believes that the Government must enable a well-established framework of licenced, regulated and measured water extractions to continue to operate. The FPH and RRO Regulations provide that certainly, whilst ensuring that irrigators have the strict framework to operate within, while protecting critical environmental, town and downstream water needs, as with all other forms of licenced water extraction. The reforms will allow irrigators to continue historical and best practice irrigation with certainly around New South Wales.

Warren Shire Council would welcome an invitation to present its submission to the Inquiry should an opportunity allow this to occur. In addition, should you require clarification or additional information on any part of our submission, please do not hesitate to contact Council's Mayor, Councillor Milton Quigley or General Manager, Gary Woodman.

Yours faithfully,

Milton Quigley  
Mayor

Gary Woodman  
General Manager