

**Submission
No 240**

INQUIRY INTO FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING

Organisation: Greater Shepparton City Council

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30 August 2021

Upper House Committees
Legislative Council
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

By Email Only: floodplainharvesting@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

NSW SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission into this important inquiry, the outcomes of which will have significant impacts on all regions of the Murray Darling Basin.

Greater Shepparton City Council is in the heart of the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID). The region has invested significantly in the modernisation of irrigation and enabled the return of water to the environment to the benefit of all Australians. It is also one of the most effectively regulated irrigation districts in Australia.

Council strongly objects to any form of water extraction within the Murray Darling Basin that will pose a threat to the economic viability of the irrigation industry, the environmental integrity of the rivers and wetlands or the deprivation of local communities and Aboriginal nations to the right to culturally engage with these natural assets.

The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report has categorically outlined the real and present impacts of climate change. If immediate action is not taken by governments now, the planet will continue to see temperatures rise sooner than expected with severe impacts on water availability. The CSIRO found in 2020 that Australia's average temperature has already risen by 1.4°, demonstrating that we are at the forefront of the impacts of climate change. This situation will continue to pose a threat to the long term sustainability of our inland river systems.

In light of this, Greater Shepparton City Council supports the following recommendations, informed by the University of New South Wales, Centre for Ecosystem Science:

- The uncertainties regarding the hydrological modelling which was the basis for the licensing framework should be resolved and made publically available to ensure there is confidence in the floodplain harvesting volumes for licensing.

- Floodplain harvesting licenses should not be tradeable and the quantity of water extracted should reflect the level of extraction at 1993/1994 levels.
- Provisions under regulation should be made for major event based management.
- All floodplain harvesting volumes should be metered and measured including flows that enter and bypass storages.
- All floodplain harvesting should be monitored in real time, using the most up to date and best practice technology such as meters, satellite imagery and drones.
- All rainfall runoff should be measured, metered and reported as part of the extraction limits and the licensing framework.
- Implement flow triggers so floodplain harvesting is only permitted where the progression of flows to downstream points are achieved.
- All reporting of floodplain harvesting is transparent and aligned with the Murray Darling Basin plan and modelling.

If you require further information, please contact Sharon Terry, Manager Environment

Yours sincerely

Peter Harriott
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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