

Mr Phillip Rudd
General Manager
Rous County Council
PO Box 230
LISMORE NSW 2480

Our ref: OUT21/17244

23 March 2022

Dear Mr Rudd

DPE Water concurrence - Rous County Council (RCC) Future Water Project 2060 IWCM Strategy

Thank you for your email of 30 July 2021 seeking DPE Water concurrence for the Rous County Council (RCC) Future Water Project 2060 Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy (the Strategy).

The Strategy indicates that with projected population growth the existing headwork supply source capacity will need to be augmented to maintain an adequate level of water security to meet the projected 2060 demand. To achieve this outcome, the Strategy recognises a number of water security risks, some outside the control of RCC.

The Strategy identifies risk mitigation measures that include staged augmentation of groundwater sources and proposes four yearly reviews of the Strategy. This approach will provide opportunities for adaptive planning, further stakeholder engagement and collaboration with DPE Water to ensure continued best-practice implementation.

The Strategy is consistent with the Best Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage Guidelines 2007 and IWCM Checklist 2019. DPE Water has reviewed the Strategy and confirms concurrence.

DPE Water notes that

- RCC has commenced work to update and review its Asset Management, Financial (including bulk water pricing), Drought Management and Emergency Response Plans and
- RCC's newly elected governing body resolved at its first meeting on 16 February 2022 to complete detailed cultural heritage and biodiversity assessments for the proposed Dunoon Dam.

DPE Water recommends that in order to support the RCC proposed four yearly review of the Strategy, additional work may be needed on:

- Secure yield estimates – data sets used to estimate secure yield have limitations and the operating rules may also need review. Therefore, secure yield estimates will need to be reviewed particularly where consideration is being given to significant capital investments
- Growth and demand estimation approach – lot yields have been used to project future growth and water demands. These estimates should be checked against approval and billing data held by constituent councils as well as peak day demand and distribution needs.

- Formal agreements on sharing of data and infrastructure resources need to be developed to facilitate coordination between constituent councils and better long-term water planning and management.

Regular review and updating of the Strategy will also enable consideration of the outcomes of new studies including the CSIRO study currently underway to support the Far North Coast Regional Water Strategy.

DPE Water staff will continue to provide technical assistance and work collaboratively with RCC in the development of the additional planning and pricing models as well as implementation and review of the Strategy.

Please do not hesitate to contact your regional representative or Mr Glenn George, Regional Manager North Water Utilities in the first instance, should you have any queries or require further assistance. Mr George can be contacted via email at glenn.george@dpie.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Michael Blackmore
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Water Operations Division
DPE Water