



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**Namoi Water Strategy an opportunity too good to miss**

The NSW Governments' draft Namoi Regional Water Strategy includes a lot of potentially useful and sensible options for water security in the Namoi catchment as we face a drying, warming future.

Inland Rivers Network is concerned that by presenting the controversial Dungowan dam proposal as a done deal, most of the good ideas could be filed away forever.

"We have a once in a generation opportunity to invest in new technologies and reduce the demand on precious water supplies.

"Yet the National Party are stubbornly clinging to an outdated notion that building dams somehow creates more water, when all they do is shift water from people in the lower catchment and damage the river in the process," said Bev Smiles, President of Inland Rivers Network.

The Dungowan dam proposal was used as a case study showing flawed decision making by the Productivity Commission in their review of National Water Reform in February this year.<sup>1</sup>

"The promise that the expensive Dungowan dam could provide new water in a fully allocated system is an illusion. All this dam would do is deny the environment and water users downstream of their entitlements, and for those upstream send the price of water sky high." Bev Smiles said.

The review found the dam would provide water at a cost of over \$60,000 a megalitre, while the current market price for one megalitre is \$1,341.

"Clearly the dam plan doesn't make economic sense and the community deserves to see the business case before a funding decision is made," said Ms Smiles

Options in the strategy that Inland Rivers Network support include research into groundwater health, implementing the Native Fish Passage Strategy, and investment into purified recycled water treatments for major towns.

Inland Rivers Network congratulates the NSW Government for their work alongside First Nations Groups, and supports options to create an Aboriginal River Ranger program and secure water for cultural sites.

"We don't want to see this opportunity for investment in positive outcomes lost because the Government is rusted on to last century thinking. Dams do not make water."

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**Media Contacts**

**Bev Smiles 0428 817 282**

[inlandriversnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:inlandriversnetwork@gmail.com)

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Productivity Commission, February 2021. Draft Report National Water Reform 2020