

20 May 2022

Daniel Connor
Director - Healthy Floodplains Project Delivery

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Dear Dan

Review of NSW Barwon Darling Model Build and Scenarios reports relevant to Floodplain Harvesting Policy implementation

Thanks for allowing us the opportunity to review the Model Build and Scenarios reports for the Barwon-Darling River system. The current version of the report shows significant improvement over the earlier versions viewed and we congratulate the Department for their continued efforts working through our comments and suggestions through the review process.

We note that the following processes have been undertaken in reviewing these documents and this endorsement letter forms the final part of that from our independent review perspective. The key elements of the review process are:

- a) Model Build and Scenario Reports sent to us on 14 April 2021 for review
- b) Independent Reviewers examined the documents and provided annotated reports and specific comments to DPIE-W on 16 May 2021 indicating that we were unable to endorse the Model Build Report at that time and would therefore not be considering the Scenario Report until a revised Model Build Report was presented.
- c) Fully revised Model Build Report sent for review on 28 March 2022.
- d) Comments back to DPIE-W on 14 April 2022
- e) This letter which summarises the comments of 14 April and notes our endorsement

Barwon-Darling--- Model Build Report

This report, dated March 2022, has been significantly improved from the previous version and in a more readable style. We note that there were a significant number of changes to the modelling and reporting, and that given the number of changes made, especially in response to closer review of the data, that the learnings from identifying the need for the changes are more closely considered in other valleys such that a more adaptive management and modelling process is undertaken. That is, the learnings from the improvements made here, cognisant of both the uniqueness of water extractions in the Barwon-Darling, and that the modelling was undertaken in the IQQM platform, is reflected back to other modelling efforts will be quite critical to demonstrate ongoing improvement to stakeholders.

We also note the challenges of accounting for the way water resource access is allocated in Queensland and the implications for flows into NSW at Mungindi, but we still believe that the issue of how observed vs modelled flows at this point have been dealt with needs further explanation and justification, as to a non-modeller, this is still somewhat unclear.

Barwon-Darling Model Scenarios Report

We have reviewed the Scenarios Report dated March 2022 provided to us and consider that version satisfies our independent review requirements and recommendations. These scenario reports are probably those which are likely to have the highest degree of scrutiny from stakeholders and we commend the Department on providing a clear and concise summary.

Further assistance

We note that both Tony and Greg are still involved in participating in review of the Namoi River modelling and scenario assessments but this is being conducted in a different manner to the other systems so far reviewed. As such, we look forward to continuing to assist the Department in addressing our review recommendations and in the ongoing process of implementing the Floodplain Harvesting Policy.

Given it is our understanding that the comments above have been considered in the final publication of the Barwon-Darling Model Build and Scenario Assessment reports, we endorse these documents as having addressed the relevant recommendations of our previous Independent Review. As always, we are more than willing to assist in the interpretation of these comments and/or expansion of them should it be required.

Yours sincerely

Tony Weber and Greg Claydon

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