

Ref: D2016/141642

Ms Katrine O'Flaherty
Director Regions, Western
NSW Department of Planning and Environment
PO Box 58
Dubbo NSW 2830

Dear Ms O'Flaherty

Draft Far West Regional Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Far West Regional Plan (the Draft Plan).

WaterNSW is responsible for managing and protecting 42 water storages and associated water supply infrastructure across NSW. WaterNSW assets in the area covered by the Draft Plan include the Menindee Lakes water supply system, the future Murray River to Broken Hill pipeline, and 30 weirs located on Murray River, Darling-Barwon Rivers and Murrumbidgee-Lachlan Rivers. WaterNSW can provide the relevant list of weirs if required.

WaterNSW manages operations, maintenance and asset delivery activities for assets in the Menindee Lakes system and provides bulk water supply to licensed customers including Essential Water and Lower Darling landholders. Also, WaterNSW is currently progressing with the work on Murray River to Broken Hill pipeline and will develop capital works projects on behalf of NSW Government to ensure water security for Broken Hill region communities.

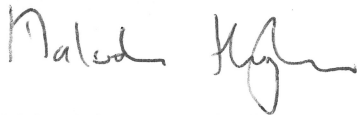
WaterNSW notes Direction 14 of the Draft Plan discusses the protection of water catchments for the health of the region. WaterNSW has responsibility under *the Water NSW Act 2014* to manage and protect catchment health and water quality in declared catchment areas. At this stage the Sydney drinking water catchment area is the only declared catchment area. WaterNSW has no regulatory or authority role for catchment health or water quality within catchments referred in the Draft Plan.

In July 2016, the Department of Primary Industry Water's (DPI Water) unregulated and groundwater customer systems were transferred to WaterNSW. Services now under WaterNSW's responsibility include the operation and maintenance of hydrometric services (including stream gauging and groundwater monitoring, metering services and water quality monitoring equipment), assets (physical/non-physical), including those assets located in the area covered by the Draft Plan.

Attachment 1 details issues raised in the Draft Plan that may have implications for WaterNSW.

WaterNSW welcomes further engagement in the preparation of the Regional Plan and its subsequent implementation. If you have any queries on the above, please contact Alison Kniha on 4724 2451 or at alison.kniha@waterNSW.com.au.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Hughes', with a stylized flourish at the end.

MALCOLM HUGHES
Manager Catchment Protection

13/3/17

Issues identified in the draft Plan that may have implications for WaterNSW

No	Reference	Issue	Comment
1	Goal 2 p. 39, Figure 6 p. 40,	Facilities on relevant maps	The Regional Plan should include key water storage facilities on relevant maps. WaterNSW can provide the relevant GIS layers if required.
2	Direction 1, 5th paragraph, p.16 Goal 2, 3rd paragraph, p.39	The NSW Government will map highly productive important agriculture land that could be developed for more intensive agriculture through irrigation Irrigation infrastructure has already modified floodplains and lakes	The final wording is critical in order to not raise expectations that cannot be delivered. A significant proportion of the Plan area is classified as arid and semi-arid rangelands with limited water resources.
3	Direction 9, p.32	Priority for infrastructure upgrades, seasonal water allocation, coordinated approach to water resources and water sharing plans that set limits for extractions.	At this stage WaterNSW has no firm short to medium-term plans to augment assets in the Far West Region. There is the possibility that through the implementation process of the Basin Plan, sustainable diversion limit adjustment (SDLA) projects may be required in Far West of NSW. In NSW, this process is led by Department of Primary Industry – Water, with overall management of the basin Plan conducted by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.
4	Direction 14, p.42	Consideration of climate variability in developing a 'waterfront management strategy'	The inference that this challenge may affect water security and therefore may require additional water infrastructure could be emphasised more in the document.
5	Water security projects at Broken Hill and Cobar, p.52 2nd paragraph, last sentence	"The project will contribute to meeting water recovery targets under the Murray–Darling Basin Plan, and will help irrigation industries across the State".	The Broken Hill project may help irrigation industries within the proximity of the pipeline, but not "across the State".
6	The region's west – the vast outback NSW, p.65	The 270 km Broken Hill pipeline ... will open up opportunities for new development and new industries	Text should be amended to read " <i>This infrastructure may, subject to prudent planning and cost considerations, enable opportunities for new development and new industries that require a reliable secure water supply</i> ".
7	Economic opportunities, p.66	Establish new industries following improvements to water security from the Murray River to Broken Hill pipeline.	Text to be added: " <i>A secure, reliable water supply with stable water quality parameters may, subject to cost considerations, open opportunities for further industries or provide sufficient confidence around water supply to derive expansion of existing industry.</i> "

