



Healthy Rivers Dubbo

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Media Release

WaterNSW keep trying to flog a dud plan

WaterNSW continued to push the Macquarie River Gin Gin re-regulating dam project on concerned communities last week, despite the significant deficiencies with the project plans identified by the NSW Government last year.

Government documents seen by Healthy Rivers Dubbo say the project plans did not demonstrate value for money and an effective, efficient and prudent use of public funds. As a result funding for the final business case was delayed by eight months.

The only reason given for the project is to increase water for the irrigated cotton industry as the climate warms and dries. The estimated capital expense of the dam is \$84 million before the cost of environmental offsets, meaning the project would be a massive public subsidy for the export cotton industry.

Funding for the Environmental Impact Statement was denied last October, and as of last week still had not been secured.

Calls from the community have been growing for Member for Dubbo Dugald Saunders MP to release the business case now, before more good money is thrown at the unpopular project.

Quotes from Mel Gray, Convenor of Healthy Rivers Dubbo.

"This dam would take water from downstream irrigators and make it available only for a powerful and privileged few upstream. Recreational fishing, hospitality and tourism industries would also be hard hit if this dam is built. Will the business case look at those local economic impacts?"

"Water agencies use questionable 'modelling' to change the answer to our questions about how much extra water will be taken every time we ask. I've seen so many different answers that anything they say now is meaningless. They will take as much water as they can.

"Locals in Warren remember how devastating it was when the Macquarie was cut off in the recent drought, and fish had to be rescued from the river. The Government has said that in future droughts the river could be cut off at Gin Gin. Anyone downstream of this proposed dam should be very worried."

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10/5/2021