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Media Release

Floodplain Harvesting Inquiry Report Calls for Illegal Floodplain Works to be Removed

15th December 2021

Healthy Rivers Dubbo is strengthening calls for all unapproved and illegal floodplain harvesting levees in the Macquarie Valley to be removed from the landscape as soon as possible, following the release of the Select Committee's report into Floodplain Harvesting¹.

The report made three recommendations about unapproved floodplain levee works:

- That no levees alter natural flows when extraction is not permitted
- That all unlawful structures are removed within 6 months
- That no floodplain harvesting licences be issued for illegal levee works

"It seems remarkable that the government has not yet removed illegal floodplain works in the Macquarie Wambuul Valley, especially as these works have been denying critical flood flows to the Ramsar listed Macquarie Marshes for decades now.

"Even more remarkable that the government would be considering granting valuable floodplain harvesting entitlements to so many of these works." **Said Lou Norton of Healthy Rivers Dubbo.**

The NSW Water Minister recently confirmed that sixty nine unapproved floodplain works in the Macquarie, which have never been assessed for their environmental impact, are to be issued with floodplain harvesting licences. Six of those works are considered 'hotspots' – works that impede critical flood flow paths into the Macquarie Marshes.

If illegal, unapproved floodplain works were removed from the Macquarie Valley, the volume of floodplain harvesting licences issued would be reduced by about two thirds.

"Floodplain harvesting always takes the first flows when a drought breaks, denying water to the Macquarie Marshes for a long time, and artificially extending the length of droughts." said Ms Norton.

The report also called on NSW to show the public how they worked out the new extraction limits in each valley, and show that the new limits would protect the environment.

"Healthy Rivers Dubbo wrote in our submission to the inquiry that the level of floodplain harvesting in the Macquarie should be zero, as that is the figure quoted in the Basin Plan." said Ms Norton.

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¹ [Select Committee on Floodplain Harvesting 15 December 2021](#)