SUBMISSION REGARDING DRAFT NSW GROUNDWATER STRATEGY

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I only wish to comment on one part of the strategy document, namely the section on Climate Change commencing on page 22 of the document.

This section is written as if the impact of climate change on groundwater is definitive. For example: "The predicted future annual change in groundwater recharge volumes is shown in Figure 8."

The reference for this forecast is cited as "5. Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2021–Report prepared by CSIRO–Crosbie, RS, Charles, SP, Rojas, R, Dawes, W, Fu, G, Rassam, D, Barry, K and Pickett, T 2021, Impact of climate change on groundwater in NSW–Preliminary assessment of the sensitivity of recharge and groundwater resources to a projected drying climate.

I could not find this reference and, upon request to the DPIE was informed that the project related to the publication will not be completed until the end of the year.

There are considerable uncertainties when it comes to forecasting climate change and the impact of climate change, including on ground water. This is clear, for example, from an earlier publication by the CSIRO "The Impact of Climate Change on Groundwater Resources: The Climate Sensitivity of Groundwater Recharge in Australia" (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225209861)

The strategy document should not make definitive statements on the impact of climate change on ground water, at least until results of the above project are published, and, even then, the results should be suitably qualified. More importantly, policy related to the management of groundwater should not be formulated on the assumption of definitive negative forecasts.

Very wise words to this effect can be found at the very end of the DPIE document "New climate analysis informs NSW's regional water strategies." (New climate analysis informs NSW'S regional water strategies), namely:

> **A note of caution:** There is always a level of uncertainty with this type of modelling, which needs to be taken into account as part of any decision-making and planning for water security.
>
> In some instances, this may mean managing risks to our water security by being prepared and resilient, rather than relying on firm predictions.
>
> As the science develops further, we will be able to reduce or quantify some of these uncertainties.

The final Groundwater Strategy should reflect this statement.