



Rous County Council Future Water Plan 2060

Public Exhibition of revised Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy

Report on outcomes

July 2021

Report Index

Rous County Council consultation statement	4
Independent assessment	5
1. Executive summary and high level findings	6
1.1 High level findings:	7
2. Context and communications & consultation methodologies	9
3. Knowledge about the FWP2060 – online survey statistics only	11
(Q8. How did you hear about the Future Water Project 2060?)	11
3.1 Participation and contribution through the Public Exhibition phase	12
4. Online submissions	14
4.1 Format of survey	15
4.2 Respondent information	16
4.2.1 Age category	16
4.2.2 Identification as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	17
4.2.3 Location	17
4.3 Historical participation and whether feedback included	19
4.3.1 Feedback from respondents who contributed to the previous Public Exhibition phase	19
4.4 Water source and customer base	20
4.5 Support for water source options in the FWP2060	21
4.5.1. Groundwater	21
4.5.2 Desalination	22
4.5.3 Direct potable recycled water	23
4.5.4 Indirect potable recycled water	23
4.5.5 Summary	23
4.5.5 Free text field ‘Other’	24
4.6 Key aspects of measurable success	25
4.6.1 Comparison between ‘economic’ as <i>most</i> important success factor and groundwater sentiment	25
4.6.2 Comparison between ‘Environment’ as most important success factor and groundwater sentiment.	26
Written submissions	29
5. Written submissions	30
5.1 Location of respondents	30
5.1.2 Percentage by constituent Councils	31
5.2 Results – ‘for’ the revised FWP2060	33
5.3 Results ‘against’ the revised FWP2060	34
5.4 Written submission results	35
5.5 Submission formats	36
5.6 Submissions received through RCC website contact portal	38
6. Petition signatures	40
6.1 Location of petitioners	40
6.1.1 Petitioners ‘for’ the FWP2060 (#1,110)	40
6.1.2 Petitioners ‘against’ the FWP2060 (#10,208)	41
6.2 Petitions ‘against’ the revised FWP2060	42

6.3 Petitions 'for' the revised FWP2060	44
7. Late submissions	45
8. Pre-exhibition submissions	45
9. Data comparison and discussion	50

Rous County Council consultation statement

The Future Water Project 2060 (FWP2060) placed on Public Exhibition in 2021 was updated from the version placed on Public Exhibition in 2020. This followed the decision of Rous County Council (RCC) in 2020 to not proceed with the Dunoon Dam proposal.

These planning updates and stakeholder engagement are undertaken to meet RCC's obligation to the community to ensure ongoing and long-term water security in response to rising water consumption and current supply limitations.

Information provided within the FWP2060 explained RCC's need to confirm a preferred and definitive long-term water security plan. This is to provide long term water security for residents and business and reduce the risk of critical water shortages, water restrictions and other responses.

RCC greatly appreciates the time invested by constituents, residents, consumers and others who made submissions. RCC recognises there are also many stakeholders who are interested in and value water security, but who didn't make a submission during the April to May 2021 Public Exhibition phase.

RCC will again carefully consider the recent Public Exhibition submissions, building on the community's input in 2020.

Future decisions based on the scientific investigations and community feedback requires the balancing of a number of priorities including environmental, social, and economic outcomes to achieve water security to underpin to the region's future.

Ongoing communication and engagement with key stakeholders and the broader community will occur during the determination and delivery of the region's long-term water security solution.

July 2021

Independent assessment

RCC engaged the Vaxa Group, a specialist stakeholder engagement and communications agency to independently review the 2021 Public Exhibition submission data and to prepare this report.

The key author, Greg Bourke, prepared the July to September 2020 Public Exhibition submission outcomes report and was previously involved in stakeholder engagement during the preparation of the Future Water Strategy (2014). Greg was also supported by colleagues with experience in consultation and data analysis.

Greg was selected to review data and prepare the following report based on his subject matter expertise, knowledge of the region, and demonstrated impartiality during previous water strategy engagement and reporting.

1. Executive summary and high level findings

Total submissions received:

RCC online survey:	558
Written:	1,854 (1,849 unique submitters)
Petition respondents:	11,318
Late written:	50
Through website:	7
Total:	13,782

Rous County Council (RCC) is responsible for the ongoing, secure delivery of bulk and potable water supply for the majority of areas across the four (4) constituent Councils of Lismore, Ballina, Byron, and Richmond Valley.

RCC's key responsibility is to ensure sufficient water security to meet current and longer-term demand. Water security planning factors variables such as population growth, consumption trends, climate change, along with the capability of key water infrastructure assets, such as the Rocky Creek Dam.

To meet these responsibilities and consumer expectations, across 2018-2019 RCC reviewed and updated their strategic outlook on water demand and supply. This built upon the direction set within the Future Water Strategy, adopted by RCC in 2014.

This process led to the development of the **Future Water Project 2060 (FWP2060)**, which presents options to ensure water security to at least 2060, including short and longer-term actions.

Report context

The FWP2060 (2020 version) was placed on Public Exhibition in 2020, with the results contained in a consultation report provided to Council and made public in late 2020.

RCC decided to revise the FWP2060 based on the outcomes of the 2020 Public Exhibition to omit the Dunoon Dam option from future consideration and dispose of the land held by Council.

RCC elected to invite a further round of public review and comment about the FWP2060 (2021 version) during the most recent Public Exhibition period, which was open from 1 April to 28 May 2021.

The outcomes of the 2021 Public Exhibition phase are the subject of this report.

Key documents were made available to the public to inform submissions via the 'Future water for our region' webpage, including the revised FWP2060, *Future Water Project 2060 IWCM Strategy, March 2021*.

Highlights

- **13,782 "submissions"** received through a variety of means, representing a 10-fold increase from 2020 Public Exhibition phase
- Majority of submissions from the Lismore Local Government Area (LGA).
- High levels of support for the Dunoon Dam based on it being a long-term solution and able to cater for future growth needs
- Environmental and cultural / heritage factors seen as key to success, followed by agriculture & the economic
- **Online submissions only** - conditional and cautious support for groundwater as a water supply option - other options are more strongly supported.

The revised FWP2060 *excludes* the Dunoon dam proposal and proposes alternative water sources through groundwater harvesting and treatment, desalination, direct potable water and indirect potable water re-use. These uses would complement ongoing water extraction from Rocky Creek Dam.

Despite RCC's decision to discontinue work on the Dunoon Dam option, and the revised FWP2060 clearly reflecting this decision, the prospect of the Dunoon Dam remains in focus for engaged stakeholders.

1.1 High level findings:

Distinctly different data sets

The data received during Public Exhibition has been generated and organised through different channels and formats create three (3) distinct data sets:

- Survey content – with response to set questions
- Written submissions – based on pre-prepared proforma submission format
- Petition signatures.

The survey data generated quantitative data and rich anecdotal information, and the submissions and petitions provided more standardised wording to support set positions with respect to the FWP2060.

The data is therefore reported separately, based on considerable differences in format and origin.

The variation in submitter origin provides further reason not to co-mingle this data, as follows:

- Survey: 95.5% within constituent Council areas
- Petition: ~83% within constituent Council areas
- Submissions: 74% within constituent Council areas.

In addition to this profile, there was differing levels of contribution from the four (4) constituent Council areas across the various formats/channels. For example, 66% of online surveys originated from the Lismore LGA, whereas 25% of 'for' petitions originated from the Lismore LGA. Contribution from Byron Shire was generally low, however 47.25% of 'for' petitions originated from Byron Shire (with 2.75% within the separate 'against' submission).

While the survey was able to collect data on the proportion of town water customers versus non-town water customers, this information is not available through submissions and petitions. However the profile of town water versus non-town water consumers will vary from the profile of survey submitters and petitioners.

There is also uncertainty about the degree to which the FWP2060 document on Public Exhibition was referenced, with likely variability among the data sets. A higher percentage of FWP2060 review is presumed through survey responses, as these were both available through the project webpage.

Online survey data and support for the FWP2060

The written (proforma) submissions and petitions clearly state a position for or against the FWP2060, primarily based on a stance towards the Dunoon Dam.

With reference to support for the FWP2060 within survey data, support for groundwater can be seen as a proxy for support for FWP2060, as this is one of the lead water security strategies. The slight majority of survey respondents support the use of groundwater (50.25%); however support is stronger for:

- Indirect potable recycled water (64.25%) and direct potable recycled water (68%)
- Desalination (56.75%).

There is less support for these options among supporters of the Dunoon Dam, and the majority of respondents were from the Lismore City Council LGA. The level of support expressed for the above alternatives cannot be assumed for coastal populations.

Within the 'free text' field at the conclusion of the survey, over 70% of respondents took the opportunity to express a stance towards the Dunoon Dam (45% against, 27% for). However, as this field did not seek a view on Dunoon Dam and not all submitters took this opportunity, this proportion should be viewed with some caution.

Submissions and petition data

Based on submissions and petition data, the majority of respondents support further work being undertaken on the Dunoon Dam proposal as part of the region's water security solution, with less confidence in other water source options.

The petition data (11,318) dominated the overall data set, particularly the 10,208 respondents who expressed support for Dunoon Dam.

The minority ('for' the revised FWP2060) of petition respondents also expressed support for groundwater, in addition to:

- Water loss management focused on RCC assets
- Drought management planning
- Smart metering.

With respect to petition submissions 'for' the revised FWP2060 and in relation to groundwater, there was support expressed provided this is sustainable and not sourced from the existing upper-level Alstonville aquifer.

Key common interest from all data

While different in origin, channels and format, the data tends to converge on various preferences to secure longer term water security. The Dunoon Dam proposal is a common interest across all surveys and submissions received.

Number of unique submitters

With respect to online and written submissions, data matching shows some respondents made more than one submission. Analysis by RCC shows that between 40 and 50 respondents made both online and written submissions. However, a total of 50 double submissions within this large data set is considered statistically insignificant and could not distort the outcomes.

Data origin

The majority of submissions were received from Lismore and Ballina, and nearby surrounding areas, with the greatest number originating from the Lismore City Council LGA across almost all data sets. A significant difference was the large contribution from Byron Shire in the 'for' FWP2060 petitions, wherein 47.25% of petitions were received from this LGA, which was far greater than any other LGA.

2. Context and communications & consultation methodologies

RCC made background reports available via a dedicated page on the RCC website (<https://rous.nsw.gov.au/future-water-for-our-region>). To ensure the content was accessible and engaging, RCC provided the following information and tools:

- Community summary brochure
- Key documents & summaries (PDF for review and/or download)
- Responses to frequently asked questions categorised as: General, Groundwater, Other questions & Dunoon Dam.

RCC promoted the opportunity to make comment through the Public Exhibition in various ways:

- **Advertisements within media** - Information advertisement campaigns ran on two television stations with a total of 307 x 30 second advertisements being run (estimated viewer reach was over 150,000)
- **Flyers** – A combined ~33,000 information flyers were distributed in RCC constituent rate notices and via direct mail
- **Print media** - three media releases, with media coverage
- **Social media** - four social media posts on RCC’s Facebook page, with ‘shares’ and content re-purposing by third parties
- **Information events** – 16 community and industry information events were held (direct reach over 400)
- **Radio interviews** – separate interviews on two (2) local radio stations with RCC Chair or RCC’s General Manager.

Access to information to support submissions during the Public Exhibition phase

RCC updated the FWP2060 website, which also included a prominent banner on the RCC website landing page (as pictured). Based on website analytical data, there was relatively high traffic during the Public Exhibition phase. There were access peaks which likely coincided with RCC promotion, media and community activism.

RCC was able to collect information from participants about their information sources, with lead sources through social media and referral from others (‘word of mouth’).



Figure 1 - RCC landing page with promotion of FWP2060

Relative to the data generated there was relatively low levels of download of core FWP2060 documents. This is consistent with other anecdote (see following discussions about RCC information sessions) wherein those participating in engagement opportunities either have set views and/or have sufficient knowledge to guide or support their views.

Evidently, access to FWP2060 information was not a limitation to participation. Based on the use of standard wording within proforma submissions and petitions, many participants were satisfied to align with prepared statements.

Information events

RCC hosted 16 information events, one immediately before 1 April 2021 and 15 between 1 April to 28 May 2021. These events were attended by representatives of local industry, local government, business, and the general community. Following is the outcomes of this engagement, as provided by RCC:

- Over 400 people attended the 16 information events
- All events had a high degree of engagement and interest in the information being provided
- RCC received many questions and generally the events ran over the allocated time
- Typically, industry groups focused on specific elements of the FWP2060. Community groups' interests spanned all elements of the revised FWP2060, including why certain options were omitted from the FWP2060, i.e. stormwater harvesting or Dunoon Dam. RCC spent most time during these sessions addressing misconceptions
- Of the questions received, only a small number of questions demonstrated a high degree of knowledge of the revised FWP2060 and related documentation
- Feedback provided to RCC by event attendees was very positive - attendees actively demonstrated their appreciation for the time invested to host events, answer questions and openly share information
- Events held in the Byron Shire area had lower attendance rates and generally a lower level of engagement. (This was somewhat unexpected given potential FWP2060 actions planned for this region, and the otherwise high level of engagement in lifestyle, liveability and sustainability)
- RCC observed, during most sessions, a very clear demarcation between those who did not support the former Dunoon Dam proposal and those who did (very little grey area). While the Dunoon Dam is not part of the revised FWP2060, it was top of mind for many event attendees, which translated into the submissions received.

Aboriginal Stakeholder engagement - FWP2060

No specific FWP2060 meetings were held with Aboriginal stakeholders during the Public Exhibition phase. However, RCC provided project updates through Reconciliation Action Plan meetings, along with discussions with the Ngulingah Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) and Widjabul Wia-bal Peoples Native Title Claim group.

However, due to the time bounds and constraints of Public Exhibition, genuine consultation could not be accommodated. However, RCC commits to ongoing Aboriginal stakeholder engagement during the further planning and delivery of the FWP2060.

Ongoing representation following 2020 FWP2060 Public Exhibition

Submissions continued to be made by stakeholders following the 2020 Public Exhibition and leading into the 2021 Public Exhibition of the FWP2060.

Information about these submissions are included in this report, however they are not calculated as data from the 2021 FWP2060 Public Exhibition.

3. Knowledge about the FWP2060 – online survey statistics only

(Q8. How did you hear about the Future Water Project 2060?)

Table 1 - How online survey submitter was informed

Response	How did you hear about the Future Water Project 2060?	%
Word of mouth	135	24
Facebook group	114	20.5
Print newspaper	71	12.5
Rous County Council website	43	7.75
FWP brochure in our rates notice	38	6.75
Facebook + other	21	3.75
Radio	17	3
Word of mouth + other	14	2.5
Print newspaper + other	13	2.25
Online newspaper	10	1.75
Television	10	1.79
Email	7	1.25
Local government news	7	1.25
Formal information session	6	1
FWP brochure in our rates notice + other	6	1
Lismore App	6	1
Grand Total	558	

Social media, online/print newspapers and word-of-mouth were the highest rating responses, followed by information received in rates notices. Information appearing in social media and newspapers became catalysts for word of mouth.

This information demonstrates that multi-channel promotion is important for broad reach and the most effective means to convey public information. This result also demonstrates traditional print advertising remains important to RCC constituents and stakeholders. This is likely to also suit older demographics who tend to be more interested in public/ Government strategy and associated engagement, and tend to have more discretionary time.

3.1 Participation and contribution through the Public Exhibition phase

The **1 April to 28 May 2021** public exhibition phase generated four (4) core sets of data:

Table 2 – Submissions by specific channel

Format of response	Submissions
RCC online survey	558
Written submissions (largely proforma driven)	1,854
Petitions	11,317
Late (written submissions)	50

Unique submitters: 98% were unique submitters, as RCC assessed ~2% of respondents made submissions through online and written channels. This is not statistically significant or influential on the overall balance of views expressed.

Origin of submitters: Of the online and written data sets:

Table 3 – Origin of all data types

Format of response	% within constituent Councils
RCC online survey	95.5
Written submissions (largely proforma driven)	74
Petitions	~83
Late (written submissions)	Not tallied

The balance of submissions across the four (4) constituent Councils is listed further in this submission.

Online survey results

4. Online submissions

To help structure stakeholder submissions, RCC prepared an online survey seeking:

- Demographic and location data
- Information about how submitters heard about the revised FWP2060 which prompted their involvement (this is reported earlier)
- Whether they had participated in the 2020 Public Exhibition and whether their input had been accommodated
- Support for or objection to the options within the revised FWP2060 (groundwater, desalination, direct potable recycled water, indirect potable recycled water & other)
- Ranking of key aspects of FWP2060 success, as a choice between agriculture, cultural heritage, economy or environment).

A link to the online survey was provided on the dedicated page on the RCC website

(<https://rous.nsw.gov.au/future-water-for-our-region>).

All questions in the online survey, apart from those relating to personal contact details and question 11 (a free text field) were mandatory.

Reporting explanation – data calculation

Percentages have been rounded to nearest 0.25. This was done to reduce the distraction of precise percentages (e.g. 14.67 becomes 14.75). This treatment was applied as the review of the findings doesn't require exact understanding of fractions of a percent.

Therefore, the percentage count may not always add up to 100%.

4.1 Format of survey

Table 4 - Online survey fields

Online survey fields

- Name
- Age range
- Contact details
- Whether identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Postcode
- Suburb
- Local Government Area
- Whether participated in earlier consultation
- Whether town water customer, or not
- Whether feedback has been included in revised FWP2060
- How did you hear about the FWP2060
- Whether support groundwater
- If no, Reasons
- Whether support desalination
- If no, Reasons
- Whether support direct potable re-use
- If no, Reasons
- Whether support indirect potable re-use
- If no, Reasons
- Other feedback (free text field)
- Success outcomes from FWP (with guidance – agriculture, economic, cultural heritage, environmental (and able to make 4 choices).

4.2 Respondent information

Respondents were given the option to provide personal details as follows, and most respondents obliged. This information is held by RCC and not included in this report.

4.2.1 Age category

Q2. Please select your age category to help RCC to better understand generational visions for our region's future water security.

Data received:

Table 5 – Demographic data received through on-line survey

Age category	Count	%
15-24 years	12	2.25
25-34 years	36	6.50
35-44 years	78	14.00
45-54 years	118	21.25
55-64 years	99	17.75
65-74 years	159	28.50
75-84 years	48	8.50
85 years and older	2	0.25
No Response	6	1.00
Total	558	100.00

Discussion:

A high-level view of the demographic data reveals this is an older population profile compared to the regional population profile. This appears to be representative of residents with an interest in water security, who are likely to participate in formal consultation processes.

An older demographic is also likely to be responsible for water consumption (i.e. making decisions about their level of water consumption, paying bills, whether to install a rainwater tank etc.).

This is a very similar demographic profile of the 2020 FWP2060 online survey participants.

4.2.2 Identification as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Q3. Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

Table 6 – Whether identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Response	Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	%
No	538	96.50
Yes	20	3.50
Total	558	100.00

4.2.3 Location

Q4. Postcode of your usual place of residence? Q5. Suburb of your usual place of residence?

Q6. Local government area is your usual place of residence?

Table 7 – Local Government location of respondents

Response	Count - Local government area	%
Ballina Shire	104	18.75
Bonner	1	0.25
Brisbane	1	0.25
Byron Shire	55	9.75
City of Lismore	351	63.00
Clarence Valley Council	1	0.25
Inner West Council	1	0.25
Kyogle Shire	4	0.75
Lower North Shore Sydney	1	0.25
Mid Coast Council	1	0.25
Mossman Council	1	0.25
Richmond Valley Council	23	4.00

Response	Count - Local government area	%
Rous	1	0.25
Scenic Rim	1	0.25
Tweed Shire	6	1.00
No Response	6	1.00
Total	558	100.00

Table 8- representation for constituent Councils (only)

Constituent Council Areas	Count	% of 558
Lismore City Council		66
*Most common location by postcode - 2480 – Lismore and environs	360	64.50
Byron Shire Council		10
*Most common locations by postcode - 2479	15	2.75
2481	21	3.75
2483	13	2.25
2482	11	2.00
Ballina Shire Council		19.5
*Most common locations by postcode – 2478	67	12.00
2477	31	5.50
Richmond Valley Shire		4.5
*Most common location by postcode – 2470	8	1.50

**This is most common only, not all postcodes*

Discussion: As is clear from the data above, there is larger representation from the Lismore City Council area, compared to other Council areas.

The proportions are not explained by population variations, as for example the Ballina Shire Council and Lismore City Council areas have similar populations.

The high rate of response from Lismore areas may be due to an assumption the options in the revised FWP2060 and/or the prospect of Dunoon Dam will most impact Lismore City Council area. The Dunoon Dam remains a prominent issue and has more than likely motivated responses from Lismore and the Dunoon & Channon areas in particular.

Total responses by those in Byron Shire Council and Richmond Valley Shire areas equates to ~14%, which is disproportionate to the overall implications of the FWP2060 and population distribution.

4.3 Historical participation and whether feedback included

Q7. Did you previously make a submission in response to the 'Future Water Project 2060' publicly released for feedback in 2020?

Table 9 - Whether participated previously

Response	Count - Previously made a submission in 2020	%
No	380	68.00
Yes	178	32.00

Discussion

The majority of new participants in the FWP2060 appear to have been motivated to advocate for the re-inclusion of Dunoon Dam.

4.3.1 Feedback from respondents who contributed to the previous Public Exhibition phase

Do you believe your previous feedback has been reflected in the revised 2021 release of the 'Future Water Project 2060'?

Table 10 - Whether feedback was reflected in updated FWP2060

Response	%
Yes	67.50
No	32.50

Discussion: This data suggests:

- Satisfaction among 2020 respondents ("yes") who did not support Dunoon Dam, with the 2020 decision to not progress the Dunoon Dam
- Respondents who support the Dunoon Dam identify their preference is not accommodated in the revised FWP2060 ("no" response)
- This generally aligns with 75-25 ratio of objection to the Dunoon Dam in 2020, through the then online survey.

Further data analysis re whether feedback had been accommodated.

The analysis was undertaken to check whether there were any useful associations and consistency between responses. Following are the findings in relation to groundwater support and whether 2020 feedback had been accommodated.

Whether feedback was addressed, compared to groundwater sentiment.

Table 11 - feedback re groundwater

Response	%
Whether FWP2060 included feedback – “no”	100.00%
‘Against’ (sentiment on groundwater)	50.75%
‘For’ (sentiment on groundwater)	44.00%
No response (sentiment on groundwater)	5.00%
Whether FWP2060 included feedback – “yes”	100.00%
‘Against’ (sentiment on groundwater)	18.75%
‘For’ (sentiment on groundwater)	75.50%
No response (sentiment on groundwater)	5.75%

Discussion

The most coherent outcome from this data set is that respondents who considered their feedback has been considered, supported groundwater (which is consistent with opposition to the Dunoon Dam). Supporters of the Dunoon Dam (those who didn’t believe their earlier feedback had been accommodated) are mostly against groundwater, inferring this is not their preferred option.

4.4 Water source and customer base

Q6a. Are you a town water customer via either your local council or directly connected to Rous?

Table 12- Customer profile

Response	Count - Town water customer (RCC/other LGA)	%
No	187	33.50
Yes	346	62.00
No response	25	4.50

4.5 Support for water source options in the FWP2060

Respondents were asked whether they support a range of water supply sources (with no reference to Dunoon Dam or other dams, which is consistent with the revised FWP2060). Participants were also asked to provide reasons for their opposition.

(Q9 in the online survey)

Results, related to the four survey options are recorded in the following tables.

4.5.1. Groundwater

Table 13 – Relative level of support for groundwater

Response	Sentiment - 'for' or 'against' Groundwater	%
'Against'	236	42.25
'For'	280	50.25
No response	42	7.50

Discussion

When considering the overall data set, the level of acceptance of groundwater can be considered as the key proxy in gauging support for the FWP2060. Justification of objection to groundwater is listed in the following table.

4.5.1.1 Reasons for this position – opposition to groundwater use

Table 14 – Reasons for not supporting groundwater as a FWP2060 option

Responses – reason for this position (oppose)	Number of responses	%
Unsustainable, already strained, unreliable, risk of contamination	106	50.5
Insufficient knowledge/ evidence-base	33	16
Expensive	25	12
Unacceptable impacts to farming	22	10.5
Build the Dunoon Dam	18	8.5
Prefer water tanks	3	1.5
Do not build Dunoon Dam	2	1
Need population cap	1	0.5
Total	210*	100

*Note * This data includes multiple points made by respondents, and does not mean 210 respondents provided input.*

4.1.2 Desalination

Table 15 – Relative levels of support for desalination

Response	Sentiment - 'for' or 'against' Desalination	%
'Against'	216	38.75
'For'	316	56.75
No response	26	4.75

Discussion

Within this response, there is high certainty, with only a low 'skip' rate. The degree of support for desalination is much greater than earlier consultation phase; while noting the opportunity to comment about desalination is framed differently within this 2021 online survey. The context is also different, as FWP2060 no longer includes the Dunoon Dam proposal.

This result would very likely be different if there were more respondents from coastal areas, which is also true of all responses.

4.1.1.1 Reasons for this position (do not support desalination)

When asked their reason for this position, respondents provided the following reasons within a free-text fields, with no prompts.

Table 16 – Reasons for not supporting desalination

Responses * - Reason for this position (oppose)	Number of responses	%
Too expensive, energy intensive, climate change impacts	44	29
Ecological impacts from brine	35	23
Dam more sustainable	34	23
Example of other projects which are unsuccessful, not used	24	16
Should not be needed in region with high rainfall	10	6.5
RCC does not have authority, approvals risk	3	2
Useful contingency	2	1
Other misc. responses	2	1
Total	154*	~100.00

*Note * This data includes multiple points made by respondents, and does not mean 154 respondents provided input.*

4.5.3 Direct potable recycled water

Table 17 – Relative levels of support for direct potable reuse

Response	Sentiment - 'for' or 'against' Direct potable recycled water	%
'Against'	168	30.00
'For'	358	64.25
No response	32	5.75

4.5.4 Indirect potable recycled water

Table 18 - Relative levels of support for indirect potable re-use

Response	Sentiment - 'for' or 'against' Indirect potable recycled water	%
'Against'	139	25
'For'	379	68
No response	40	7

4.5.4.1 Reasons for this position

There were only very few responses to explain objection to this option. This may mean respondents didn't completely understand the technique and technologies, or at least to a lesser degree compared to desalination. The cited key concerns included:

- Cost of treatment, including high infrastructure costs
- Lack of community confidence
- Contamination risks
- Concern about use of chemicals
- Regulatory issues
- Support for gardening only
- If this is being seriously considered, then RCC should build dam.

4.5.5 Summary

These online survey results demonstrate there is not strong majority support for groundwater extraction, and surprisingly high support for desalination and indirect and direct potable re-use, at least compared to groundwater.

When considering the positive response to potable re-use, this result is likely to be caused by 'push' factors (away from groundwater and Dunoon Dam), rather than 'pull' factors, as these results are aberrant when considering contemporary community views across Australia.

The extent of positive support for desalination, for example, is not likely to be as strong in coastal areas compared to the hinterland (as the responses were more weighted to the Lismore City Council LGA).

(However, readers may note the large number of petitions ‘for’ the FWP2060 from the Byron Shire, with the inclusion of ‘sustainably powered temporary desalination plants on the coast’.

4.5.5 Free text field ‘Other’

Question 9e) The ‘Other’ field within the survey also invited additional rationale. This generated a large array of comments associated with FWP2060 inclusions and water security more broadly. This is listed below.

Table 19 - Response to free-text field 'other'

Responses – reason for this position (oppose)	Number of responses	% of respondents
<i>Do not build Dunoan Dam</i>	252	45
Support water re-use/ stormwater harvesting	213	38
Further application of water tanks needed	175	31
More, ongoing demand management and water efficiency	167	30
<i>Build Dunoan Dam</i>	134	27
Supported revised FWP2060	74	13
Support desalination	56	10
Address network leaks to save water	56	10
No use of groundwater (particularly upper levels)	34	6
Support use of groundwater	30	6
Upgrade other dams	22	4
Find alternative storage (dam) location	19	3.5
Select modular combination of sources	19	3.5
Support potable re-use	15	3
Do not support desalination	11	2
Total	1,412	~100.00

Discussion

This data set includes all comments made, with multiple points made by respondents. Over 70% of respondents used this opportunity to express a view on the Dunoan Dam as highlighted in italics. However not all respondents did so, with other using the opportunity to provide comments on new subjects. 27 respondents (~5%) did not leave additional comments.

4.6 Key aspects of measurable success

Q10. Which of the following key aspects is the most important for you to consider the measurable success of our region's Future Water Project 2060 plan? Choices are environment, cultural/heritage, economic & agriculture (+other as a free text field).

Table 20 – Measures of success of the FWP2060

Response	%
Environment	51
Economic	30
Cultural / Heritage	13
Agriculture	6

Discussion

Evidently the majority of respondents consider the highest success factor should be the environment. As follows, analysis was undertaken to assess whether there were any useful associations between the various responses.

4.6.1 Comparison between 'economic' as *most* important success factor and groundwater sentiment.

Table 21 – Comparison of economic importance compared to support for groundwater

Response	%
Economic	
No response	4.25
Do not support groundwater use	74.25
'Support groundwater use	21.50

Evidently, respondents who most value economic outcomes, have low confidence in groundwater providing sufficient long term water security.

4.6.2 Comparison between ‘Environment’ as most important success factor and groundwater sentiment.

Table 22 Comparison between ‘Environment’ as most important success factor and groundwater sentiment.

Response	%
Environment	100
Do not support groundwater	32.5
Support use of groundwater	60
No response (sentiment on groundwater)	7.5

Discussion

This is a stronger result in favour of groundwater, compared to the earlier rating. This data sub-set suggests respondents who prioritise environmental outcomes prefer groundwater instead of Dunoon Dam. This cohort tends to place higher value in demand management, water re-use and water tanks.

Which of the following key aspects is the second most important for you to consider the measurable success of our region’s Future Water Project 2060 plan?

Table 23 – Second highest response

Response	%
Cultural / Heritage	42
Agriculture	27
Environment	21
Economic	15

Discussion:

Cultural/heritage didn’t rank strongly as a first order success factor compared to the environment, but is dominant as a second order success factor. This would be closely associated with the prospect of the Dunoon Dam. This result is a close ‘proxy’ for level of support for the FWP2060, based on the close alignment of cultural heritage concerns with Dunoon Dam.

Which of the following key aspects is the third most important for you to consider the measurable success of our region's Future Water Project 2060 plan?

Table 24 – Third highest response

Response	%
Agriculture	44
Cultural / Heritage	17
Economic	24
Environment	16

Which of the following key aspects is the fourth most important for you to consider the measurable success of our region's Future Water Project 2060 plan?

Table 25 – 4th most important response

Response	%
Agriculture	27
Cultural / Heritage	27
Economic	41
Environment	5

Summation

Response	1 st choice	2 nd choice	3 rd choice	4 th choice
Agriculture	4	2	1	2*
Cultural / Heritage	3	1	3	2*
Economic	2	4	2	1
Environment #	1	3	4	4

* These values are the same (equal 5 rating)

The lower rating for environment beyond 1st choice is explained by the number of respondents entering this as their first option

Discussion

Respondents were able to progress beyond their highest success outcome (environment) to provide values for the remaining outcomes. The high rating for cultural heritage seems to be associated with the Dunoon Dam prospect rather than specific elements within the revised FWP2060. Economic rated behind agriculture but was still an important success factor for respondents.

Written submissions

5. Written submissions

RCC received a total of 1,854 written submissions (non-survey). Of the 1,854 submissions, **1,849** were unique submitters, as five respondents provided more than one (1) submission.

Of the 1,849 unique submitters, **681 are 'for'** the revised FWP2060 and **1,168 are 'against'**. These submissions were largely driven by separate standardised proforma documents. In addition, Council received petitions which is described in the following section.

The focus of these responses was either:

- Support for the revised FWP2060 with expressed opposition to the prospect of the Dunoon Dam and/or support for options contained within the FWP2060
- Opposition to the revised FWP2060 with expressed support for progressing the Dunoon Dam proposal (which was exempted from the FWP2060 in 2020).

5.1 Location of respondents

Of the total **1,849** written submissions received, 1,372 (~74%) were from constituent Council areas, as follows:

Table 26 – location of submitters (written submissions/ non-survey)

Location	Count	% of 1,849 <i>Constituent councils only</i>
Constituent Council Areas		74%
Lismore City Council	727	39.25
Most common locations -		
Lismore	206	
Dunoon/The Channon	107	
Goonellabah	145	
Tuntable Creek	25	
Nimbin	21	
Byron Shire Council	196	10.50
Most common locations -		
Byron Bay	15	
Mullumbimby	27	
Brunswick Heads	13	
Suffolk Park	22	
Ballina Shire Council	362	19.50
Most common locations -		
Ballina	119	
Alstonville	93	
Lennox Head	39	

Location	Count	% of 1,849 <i>Constituent councils only</i>
Richmond Valley Council	87	4.75
Most common locations –		
Richmond Valley	17	
Casino	47	
Non-Constituent Council Areas		26%
Other Council areas (NSW and Australia)	144	-
Location not specified	333	-

Note – It is also likely some of the 333 (18%) submissions received, where location has not been specified are also from locations within constituent Council areas.

Discussion

Approximately 8% of written submissions originated from non-constituent Council areas. This percentage may be greater, as some of the 333 submissions where location is not specified are likely to be from non-constituent Council areas.

5.1.2 Percentage by constituent Councils

Table 27 - Percentage responses by constituent Councils

Council	%
Lismore City Council	53
Ballina Shire Council	26.5
Byron Shire Council	14.25
Richmond Valley Council	6.25

Non-constituent respondent locations

In addition to submissions from constituent Council areas, submissions were received from:

Table 28 – Origin of submissions outside of the constituent Council areas

State and Council	Count
NSW	
Tweed Shire Council	14
Kyogle Council	19
Coffs Harbour City Council	7
City of Sydney	6

State and Council	Count
Camden City Council	2
Clarence Valley Council	6
Queensland	
Brisbane City Council	22
Johnstone Shire Council	3
Victoria	
Nillumbik (Eltham) Shire Council	8

Submissions from organisations

Written submissions were received by individuals and organisations. Following are the submissions received by organisations and their general stance in response to the revised FWP2060. These are included, as the submitter represents broader members.

Table 29 - Submissions from organisations 'for' the FWP2060

Responses 'for' the FWP2060
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballina Environment Society • Byron Environment Centre • Friends of the Koala Inc. • Institute for Sustainable Futures • Lismore City Council • Lismore Greens • Member for Ballina • Tuntable Creek Landcare • Water Services Association of Australia.

Table 30 – Submissions from organisations 'against' the FWP2060

Responses 'against' the FWP2060 *
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casino Food Co-Op • Richmond Valley Council • Save Alstonville Aquifer.

**A range of small businesses also submitted against the revised FWP2060.*

5.2 Results – ‘for’ the revised FWP2060

Written ‘for’ results & response coding (‘%’ are calculated using 1,849 responses)

Table 31- Support for FWP2060 and rationale

Coded responses	Count
Support for the revised FWP2060	681
DO NOT support Dunoon Dam	670
Must focus on demand management (system-wide efficiency)	634
Support sustainable groundwater harvesting (not from the upper zone of the Alstonville aquifer)	633
Smart metering	626
Potable reuse scheme	625
Drought management planning	625
Support water recycling	622
Support desalination	621
Protect Indigenous culture	599
Rainwater tanks	104
Education programs for recycling	18
Directly impacted by the Dunoon Dam	6
Prefer other dams	2

Discussion:

Consistency of responses is due to the common use of standardised proforma submissions. The ‘written’ submissions inclusion of the words, ‘I DO NOT SUPPORT the Dunoon Dam’ identifies that despite its well-publicised omission from the revised FWP2060, respondents have used the opportunity to reinforce their opposition.

There is strong support for groundwater, provided the water isn’t harvested from Alstonville in direct competition with agricultural users. If RCC is not able to demonstrate this is not the case, the expressed level of support ‘for’ groundwater would be expected to reduce substantially.

Rainwater tanks were not one of the standard alternatives on the pro-forma, but rate relatively strongly among those ‘for’ the revised FWP2060.

5.3 Results ‘against’ the revised FWP2060

Table 32 – Results in opposition to the revised FWP2060

Responses	Count
Do not support revised FWP2060	1,168
Support for alternative options, including the Dunoon Dam option	1,150
Support for Dunoon Dam option	1,144
Long term solution	1,143
Cost efficiency	239
Population management/growth	223
Drought management	144
Most environmentally friendly	125
Health concerns of recycled water	117
Flood management	79

Discussion:

The use of pro-forma submissions explains the consistency in the sentiment around the first two key points. Among the free text (reasons) comments, the Dunoon Dam is favoured as a long-term option among these submitters, to the effective exclusion of all alternatives proposed in the revised FWP2060.

In the view of these respondents, the Dunoon Dam would be able to provide a long term solution. Around 10% of those ‘against’ view the Dunoon Dam option as the most environmentally-friendly option.

Responses regarding health concerns of recycled water can be largely explained by the wording in the pro-forma, which reads, ‘*I DO NOT support potable water reuse (toilet to tap) as drinking water*’.

5.4 Written submission results

Of the 1,854 written submissions received, five respondents made more than one submission and 1,652 (~90%) were in proforma format or included standardised wording from proformas. The **net result is 1,849** submissions and this is the number upon which all comparisons are based.

Table 33 – Submission count and stance towards FWP2060

Submissions	Count	%
Oppose FWP2060		
Proforma (oppose)	1,110	60.00
Individual written submissions (non-proforma) – oppose FWP2060	53	2.75
		62.75
Support FWP2060		
Proforma (Support)	542	29.25
Individual written submissions (non-proforma) – support FWP2060	139	7.50
		37.25

The revised FWP2060 proposes a suite of water security measures, which the minority of ‘written’ respondents (~37%) support. Groundwater received support, but not from the upper levels of the Alstonville aquifer.

The majority of ‘written’ respondents (63%) support further work on the Dunoon Dam option, and the majority of these respondents do not support any of the alternatives proposed in the revised FWP2060.

5.5 Submission formats

Submissions in support of the revised FWP2060 predominantly used the following proforma:

To: General Manager, Rous County Council
council@rous.nsw.gov.au
PO Box 230, Lismore NSW 2480

'Submitter name'

'Submitter address'

Free text field - *PERSONALISE your feedback here by introducing yourself, and sharing the reasons why you want our water supply to come from alternative sources to the Dunoon Dam.

I strongly appreciate the revision of the Water Future Project 2060, and the decision to remove the Dunoon Dam from further consideration in the revised IWCM, and I also acknowledge the complexity of the work Rous does to provide water for our region.

I SUPPORT these aspects of the revised IWCM, for the reasons given in the IWCM

- Water loss (including leak) management focused on Rous assets
- Section 15.4.2, development and implementation of direct potable reuse scheme beginning with a pilot scheme
- Section 15.4.3, indirect potable water reuse, especially its potential to recharge harvested aquifers
- Sustainable groundwater usage NOT from the existing upper level Alstonville aquifer used by farmers but from the untapped Alstonville deeper aquifer
- Smart metering
- Drought management/ contingency planning
- Sustainably powered temporary desalination plants on the coast in times of drought
- The disposal of land zoned for the Dunoon Dam, set out in Table 41

I DO NOT SUPPORT the Dunoon Dam.

I reject attempts by a minority of councillors continuing to campaign for the dam. The revised IWCM clearly states, "...based on the MCA [multi-criteria analysis], the most favourable scenario is groundwater."

As the IWCM recognises, the Dunoon Dam has been, and continues to be, strongly rejected by the community on many grounds, including:

- Destruction of important Widjabul Wia-bal heritage, including ancient burial sites.(1)
- Destruction of an Endangered Ecological Community of Lowland Rainforest, in particular the very rare warm-temperate rainforest on sandstone in The Channon Gorge, and impacts on endangered wildlife.(2)
- Lost opportunity to invest in system-wide water efficiency and stop potable water wastage. Only 2% of the Rous supply is used for drinking, the rest is down the toilet and in the garden. Water efficiency is the cheapest & fastest way to ensure supply-demand balance. By focussing on system efficiency, Sydney added an additional 950,000 people without a rise in consumption.(3)
- 21st century water security requires diversity in water sources. Adding another dam to the portfolio decreases the drought resilience of the water system for our region (4)
- Industrial/construction zone for The Channon/Dunoon community; noise, machinery, trucks, visual impact. Ongoing sound impact from pump house etc.

Version 1 of this section: The IWCM recognises the Dunoon Dam as an inferior option compared to a "diversified portfolio of actions to meet the region's water security needs". I object to the wording of Section 8.13 as follows: The last

sentences should read: "Further detailed studies would have been required prior to a decision to proceed with the dam option. These studies were expected to take three years to complete", as further studies related to the dam are now redundant.

Or

Version 2 of this section: The dam option has been rejected multiple times by both the community and the Rous County Council, and has been recognised in the IWCM as an inferior option compared to a "diversified portfolio of actions to meet the region's water security needs". I object to the wording of Section 8.13 as follows: The last sentences should read: "Further detailed studies would have been required prior to a decision to proceed with the dam option. These studies were expected to take three years to complete". Further studies related to the dam are now redundant, and the IWCM wording should reflect that.

I urge Rous County Council to adopt the revised IWCM as exhibited and to proceed to implement it with urgency. This will lead our region forward with wise and well informed water options for a sustainable future.

(1) Ainsworth Heritage, Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment, 2013

(2) SMEC Australia, Terrestrial Ecology Impact Assessment, 2011

(3) Metropolitan Water Plan 2006, NSW Government. Exec Summary section of the doc

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/pu9898oq6kocrph/NSW%20Govt%202006%20MWP%20summary.pdf?d>

(4) Australian Water Services Association, All Options on the Table, 2020

This email was sent by *IDENTITY REDACTED FOR PRIVACY* via Do Gooder, a website that allows people to contact you regarding issues they consider important. In accordance with web protocol RFC 3834 we have set the FROM field of this email to our generic no-reply address at campaigns@good.do, however Heidi provided an email address (heidiroyal83@gmail.com) which we included in the REPLY-TO field.

Please reply to *INFORMATION REDACTED FOR PRIVACY*.

To learn more about Do Gooder visit www.dogooder.co

To learn more about web protocol RFC 3834 visit: <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc3834>

Written ‘against’ submissions were submitted predominantly using the following proforma:

Dear General Manager,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Revised Draft Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) Strategy.

As a permanent water supply source:
I DO NOT support groundwater (aquifer) harvesting at Woodburn, Tyagarah, Newrybar or Alstonville.
I DO NOT support desalination.
I DO NOT support potable water reuse (toilet to tap) as drinking water.

Additionally,
I DO NOT support the proposed Dunoon Dam land disposal.
I DO support the recommencement of work on the proposed Dunoon Dam option, so that reports may be completed which may result in the dam proposal being identified as a new water supply source to ensure long-term water supply security for the region.

Name: ‘Submitter name’

Address: ‘Submitter address’

Reasons: Free text field

‘Submitter name’

5.6 Submissions received through RCC website contact portal

Seven (7) submitters provided feedback through the general feedback function on the RCC website.

Of the seven submitters, five (5) expressed objection to the prospect of the Dunoon Dam and two (2) submitters expressed support for the Dunoon Dam. It is unknown whether these submitters also provided responses through the online survey or written submissions, as this was not identified.

Petition-based Submissions

6. Petition signatures

A total of **11,318 responses in petition format** were received during the Public Exhibition period, comprised of:

- **10,208** 'against' FWP2060 (~90%) (support for Dunoon Dam)
- **1,110** 'for' FWP2060 (~10%) the revised Strategy (essentially re-expressing opposition to the prospect of the Dunoon Dam).

The 'against' submissions are evidently responding to RCC's December 2020 decision to cease work on the Dunoon Dam option.

Whilst the formats of the petitions and written submissions proformas are dissimilar, the content is very similar indicating a concerted effort by organisers to convey consistent cross-platform messaging.

6.1 Location of petitioners

A full count of the petitions was undertaken to identify location for both 'for' and 'against' the FWP2060.

6.1.1 Petitioners 'for' the FWP2060 (#1,110)

Table 34 - Petitioner locality – 'for' the FWP2060

Council	%
Byron Shire Council	47.25
Lismore City Council	25
Ballina Shire Council	11.5
Richmond Valley Council	~0
Unknown/ non-constituent LGAs	16.25

The following table identifies the ratio of petitions by constituent Councils only, when unknown/ other is removed from the data set.

Table 35 - Petitioner by constituent Council only – 'for' the FWP2060

Council	%
Byron Shire Council	56.25
Lismore City Council	30
Ballina Shire Council	13.5
Richmond Valley Council	0.25

In total, 83.75% of petitioners resided in a constituent Council LGA at the time of signing a petition, and 16.25% were from another LGA (13%) or unknown/ not provided (3.25%).

6.1.2 Petitioners ‘against’ the FWP2060 (#10,208)

Table 36 - Petitioner locality – ‘against’ the FWP2060

Council	%
Lismore City Council	39.5
Ballina Shire Council	30
Richmond Valley Council	10.75
Byron Shire Council	2.75
Unknown/ non-constituent LGAs	17.25

The following table identifies the ratio of petitions by constituent Councils only, when unknown/ other is removed from the data set.

In total, 82.75% of petitioners resided in a constituent Council LGA at the time of signing a petition, and 17.25% were from another LGA (12.75%) or unknown/ not provided (4.5%).

Table 37 - Petitioner by constituent Council only – ‘against’ the FWP2060

Council	%
Lismore City Council	47.5
Ballina Shire Council	36
Richmond Valley Council	13
Byron Shire Council	3.25

Discussion

There is significant differences between petitions received from Byron LGA and Richmond Valley LGA across both data sets, and also compared to other data sources. This suggests ‘recruitment’ of petitioners is localised and highly variable, depending on location and opportunity.

Re: LGA allocations: An error factor will exist for the large ‘against’ data set in particular. This is due to factors such handwriting and locations described by contractions (e.g. g’ba for Goonellabah), and human error in manually counting and tabulating over 10,000 responses. The error considerations would account for very minor variation in the LGA allocation percentage, not the number of petitioners ‘for’ and ‘against’ the FWP2060.

6.2 Petitions ‘against’ the revised FWP2060

The ‘against’ petitions are in the following formats:

Petition – 1 April 2021

Sharon Cadwallader PO Box 230 Lismore 2480		PETITION		1 st April 2021
<p>To the General Manager Chairman & Councillors of Rous County Council We the undersigned send a clear message to you that we</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DO NOT SUPPORT THE AQUIFERS at Tyagarah, Newrybar, Alstonville and Woodburn being used as a permanent water source for the regional population into the future 2. DO NOT SUPPORT DESALINATION as a permanent water supply for our region 3. DO NOT SUPPORT TOILET TO TAP RECYCLED WATER as a permanent water supply for our region 4. DO NOT SUPPORT THE SALE OF THE DUNOON DAM LAND SITE 5. DO SUPPORT CONTINUED EXPERT TECHNICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE DUNOON DAM SO THAT AN INFORMED DECISION CAN BE MADE AS TO IT'S VIABILITY AS A WATER SOURCE 				
NAME (Print)	ADDRESS	Email	PHONE No.	SIGNATURE

Petition - 1 April 2021, reverse side

This is about planning for our future water supply for the region, because by 2024 an additional water source will need to be identified to meet future demand

If it stopped raining today there is only one year’s supply of water in the Rocky Creek Dam to meet the demand for our Northern Rivers growing population

For 25 years Rous County Council has been planning and spending millions of dollars on investigating a new dam at Dunoon

Without notice in December 2020

5 out of 8 Rous County Councillors suddenly changed their minds and axed the Dunoon Dam as a water source option

This leaves no alternative but to source water from Aquifers or Desalination or Toilet to Tap (recycled water) or all three

On April 1 Rous County Council invited community feedback regarding using the Aquifers as a permanent water supply into the future

10,000 signatures are needed to send a strong message to Rous County Council & State Government that the adopted options without the Dunoon Dam being fully investigated is unacceptable. Ballina Shire Council & Richmond Valley Council have already sent a strong message to Rous County Council that they want the Dunoon Dam studies to continue while Lismore & Byron Bay Councils have not supported this action.

Petition - dated 10 April 2021

Return to Your Coordinator before May 28 or Sharon Cadwallader PO Box 230 Lismore 2480		PETITION		10th April 2021
<p>To the General Manager Rous County Council We the undersigned send a clear message to you that we</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DO NOT SUPPORT THE AQUIFERS (Groundwater) at Tyagarah, Newrybar, Alstonville and Woodburn being used as a permanent water source for the regional population into the future 2. DO NOT SUPPORT DESALINATION as a permanent water supply for our region 3. DO NOT SUPPORT TOILET TO TAP (Potable Recycled Water) as a permanent water supply for our region 4. DO NOT SUPPORT THE PROPOSED DUNOON DAM LAND DISPOSAL 5. DO SUPPORT RECOMMENCEMENT OF WORK ON THE PROPOSED DUNOON DAM OPTION, SO THAT REPORTS MAY BE COMPLETED WHICH MAY RESULT IN THE DAM PROPOSAL BEING IDENTIFIED AS A NEW WATER SUPPLY SOURCE TO ENSURE LONG-TERM WATER SUPPLY SECURITY 		<p>Re: Revised Draft Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) Strategy</p>		
NAME (Print)	ADDRESS	PHONE No.	SIGNATURE	

Petition – dated 12 February 2021

Sharon Cadwallader PO Box 230 Lismore 2480	PETITION	12 th February 2021		
To the General Manager and Directors of Rous County Council				
We the undersigned send a clear message to you that we want and need				
1.The Dunoon Dam Studies to continue, so that an informed decision can be made as to the viability of The Dunoon Dam				
2.We object to the Dunoon Dam land to be sold off or gifted, prior to securing a clean, cost effective alternative water source				
NAME (Print)	ADDRESS	Email	PHONE No.	SIGNATURE

Although '12 February 2021' falls outside the public exhibition period, the petitions dated as such were submitted during the public exhibition period, 1 April and 28 May 2021, and are counted.

The preambles in the 'against' petitions are noteworthy on two counts: 1. There is essentially no reference to costs, save, '*For 25 years Rous County Council has been spending millions of dollars on investigating a new dam at Dunoon*' and 2. Signatories support further work/investigation on the proposed Dunoon Dam option so Council can make an informed decision. Also noteworthy is there was no free text field available for 'against' signatories to comment.

6.3 Petitions ‘for’ the revised FWP2060

The ‘for’ petitions were provided in the following formats:

Submission	
Revised Future Water Project 2060 – Integrated Water Cycle Management strategy	
To: General Manager, Rous County Council	
PO Box 230, Lismore NSW 2480	
Name:	
Address:	
Email:	
Phone:	
I’m surprise to see the Dunoon Dam appear so prominently in the IWCM as it has been rejected by the Rous Board and community multiple times.	
I want Rous Councillors to know (free text field)	
<u>I SUPPORT these aspects of the IWCM, for the reasons given in the IWCM</u>	
Water loss management focused on Rous assets	
Section 15.4.2, development and implementation of direct potable reuse scheme	
Sustainable groundwater usage NOT from the existing upper level Alstonville aquifer	
Drought management planning	
Section 15.4.3 Indirect potable water reuse, & its potential to recharge harvested aquifers	
Sustainably powered temporary desalination plants on the coast	
Table 41, the disposal of land zoned for the Dunoon Dam	
Signed:	Date:
I’d like to keep in touch with the campaign with updates from Water Northern Rivers (‘check box’)	
I want to be more actively involved (‘check box’)	

The following sentence: *‘I’m surprise (sic) to see the Dunoon Dam appear so prominently in the IWCM as it has been rejected by the Rous Board and community multiple times’*, are omitted from an alternative petition template.

This may be an earlier format and omission could be interpreted as recognition by those ‘for’ the revised Strategy that RCC is firm in its decision not to progress the Dunoon Dam option, despite references to it in the revised FWP2060.

However, the reference to Dunoon Dam is deliberately prominent and a clear indication the Dunoon Dam prospect remains a major concern for these submitters.

7. Late submissions

A total of **50 submissions** were received after the Public Exhibition period concluded on 28 May 2021. Of the 50 late submissions, 29 (58%) are ‘against’ and 21 (42%) are ‘for’ the revised FWP2060.

The submissions are noted, with the quantity of submissions not influential on the overall balance of responses received during the Public Exhibition phase.

8. Pre-exhibition submissions

Representations about the FWP2060 were received by RCC following the close of the 2020 Public Exhibition and leading into the 2021 Public Exhibition phases. This representation focused on the inclusion or exclusion of Dunoon Dam from the FWP2060.

This is represented in the following Table, prepared by RCC. Note, within this table the ‘for’ and ‘against’ refers to support for the Dunoon Dam and the 2020 FWP2060.

Table 38- Representation received by RCC between the 2020 Public Exhibition and 2021 Public Exhibition phases

Pre-exhibition submissions (submissions made post 9 September 2020* & pre-1 April 2021)						
Stance	For			Against		
Format	Petitions	Petition signatures	Individual	Petitions	Petition signatures	Individual
After 9/9/20 & before 16/12/2020^	-	-	1	-	-	210
Post 16/12/20 & pre-February 21	19	348	119	-	-	35
Post-February 2021	5	65	8	1	59#	2
Total	24	413	128	1	59	247
Grand total (signatures & individual)		541			306	

*9 September 2020 (or 9/9/20) marks the end of the first public exhibition period.

^16/12/2020 marks the date of the RCC meeting/decision to omit the Dunoon Dam option from the FWP2060.

From traditional owners.

Postcards

According to the covering letter below, '915' people signed postcards following RCC's December 2020 decision, which were then presented to RCC during the pre-Public Exhibition period. This number has not been able to be independently verified.

All signatories to the postcards are 'against' the Dunoon Dam and are in addition to the 'against' submissions tallied in the above table.

The covering letter includes a breakdown of participation statistics by the proponent, which have not been separately verified.

Covering letter

WATER Northern Rivers
5 Penelope Place
East Lismore

To the General manager and Rous County Councilors,


In response to this rescission motion, WATER Northern Rivers invited community members to write Thank You postcards to the Rous Board for stopping the Dunoon Dam. There was an overwhelming response. In just 15 days, after hundreds of volunteer hours and many conversations, 915 people from across the Northern Rivers have signed the postcards in support of the decision made on 16 December 2020 to cease all work on the Dunoon Dam.

Today we present to you the 915 postcards that were signed. The text on each of these postcards reads:

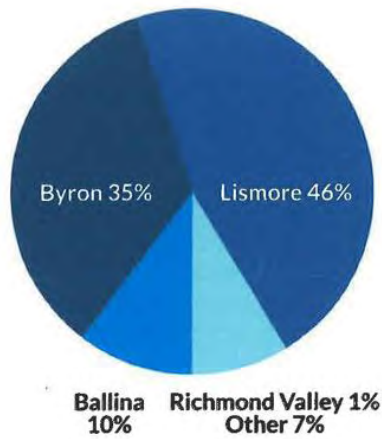
Dear Rous County Councilors,
At the last Rous County Council meeting on December 16, 2020, you accepted the Traditional Owners' statement of opposition and acknowledged that 90% of submissions were opposed to the Dunoon Dam. You also authorised the General Manager to cease all work on the Dunoon Dam and revoke zoning entitlement and begin disposal of land

Thank you! You have said **Yes** to saving koala and platypus habitat. **Yes** to preserving endangered rainforest communities. And above all, **Yes** to respecting Aboriginal people and their heritage.

The Northern Rivers is ready to showcase 21st Century water solutions while preserving the natural beauty, ecological diversity and Aboriginal heritage which makes our region such a wonderful place.

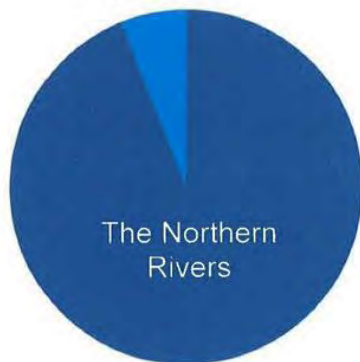


Of the 915 people who signed the postcards 35% were from Byron Shire, 10% were from Ballina Shire, 47% from Lismore City Council, and 8% from Richmond Valley Council and other areas.

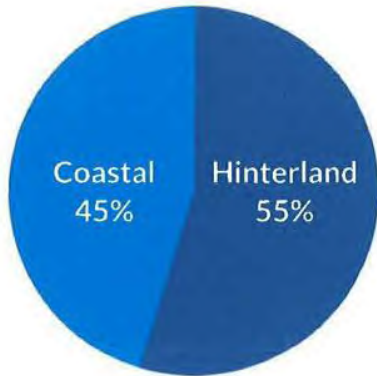


Only 6% were from the area directly impacted by the proposed Dunoon Dam, a fact that proves the movement for Smart Water Options is broadly supported across the region.

The Channon
Dunoon 6%



In total 45% were from Coastal areas with 65% from the Hinterland.



Community support for smart water options continues to grow.

These Thank You postcards come on top of the 90% of submissions made against the dam during Rous County Council's public exhibition of the Integrated Water Management Plan. And further to the petition presented to Rous County Council on 16 November 2020 signed by 525 residents of the Northern Rivers region asking them to Stop the Dunoon Dam and rethink water options.

The WATER Northern Rivers Alliance urges Rous County Council to stay true to the intention and wording of the original motion as passed on 16 December 2020.

Sincerely,



On behalf of WATER Northern Rivers



Example postcard



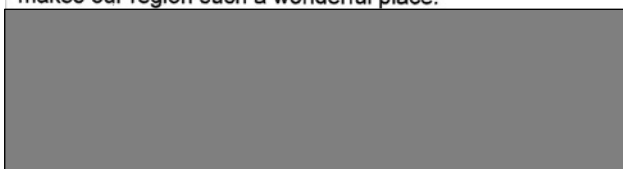
Dear Rous County Councillors,

At the last Rous County Council meeting on December 16, 2020, you accepted the Traditional Owners' statement of opposition and acknowledged that 90% of submissions were opposed to the Dunoon Dam.

You also authorised the General Manager to cease all work on the Dunoon Dam, revoke the zoning entitlement and begin disposal of land.

Thank you! You have said **Yes** to saving koala and platypus habitat. **Yes** to preserving endangered rainforest communities. And above all, **Yes** to respecting Aboriginal people and their heritage.

The Northern Rivers is ready to showcase 21st Century water solutions while preserving the natural beauty, ecological diversity and Aboriginal heritage which makes our region such a wonderful place.



Discussion:

Including signed postcards, 541 (31%) 'for' and 1,219 (69%) 'against' submissions were received outside of the Public Exhibition phases. Inclusion of this data and any related analysis is not within the scope of this report.

9. Data comparison and discussion

The three main data sets (online, written & petition) have been coded and reported separately, as they have originated through different channels and formats. Only a small number of respondents provided both online survey responses and written submissions (~50 people). There is also likely to be submitters who also signed a petition.

The written and petition submissions are very similar in their content and intent, based on organised and structured responses.

The online survey was structured to guide responses around options within the revised FWP2060, which excluded the Dunoon Dam option. The online survey results provided slight majority and conditional support for groundwater extraction, with higher support for desalination and potable re-use.

Groundwater, in particular, is considered a proxy in gauging support for the revised FWP2020, at least through the online survey. However, in the broader context of 2021 Public Exhibition outcomes, Dunoon Dam remains a clear and dominant focus of all participants.

The majority of respondents within pro-forma submissions and petitions do not support the revised FWP2060, and support re-inclusion of the Dunoon Dam. There slightly stronger support for the FWP2060 in the online survey, when groundwater is accepted as a proxy for support.

Responses from the Lismore LGA was consistently high. In this context regional water security may be seen as more relevant to the Lismore 'district' and hinterland, where the Rocky Creek Dam (main water storage) and Dunoon are located, and consequences will be more directly noticeable. In this respect, the inputs received across the data sets may not represent the broader views of stakeholders across all constituent LGAs.

RCC's experience during the FWP2060 2021 information sessions, combined with the relatively low level of engagement in the FWP2060 reports (at least to the extent evident through the project website analytics) suggests many participants haven't needed project reports to guide their decision making. However, there is a demonstrable depth of understanding of the strategic change of intent in revised FWP2060, which would account for the large number of responses generated through the 2021 FWP2060.