

The Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW

Promoting Sustainable Fishing



21 July 2021

The Hon. Melinda Pavey MP
Minister for Water, Property and Housing
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Fish screens on farm irrigation intakes

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your letter dated 12 March 2021 in response to our questions on fish screens on farm irrigation intakes.

Your advice to contact the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) was welcomed. However, the NRAR indicated in its response that it has no powers to intervene in the killing of fish. The advice from NRAR states “The issues and legislation are within the remit of the Department of Primary Industries (Fisheries)”. Accordingly, we have asked Minister Marshall for further advice on the application of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*.

With regards to our original questions on the *Water Management Act 2000* (WMAct2000), we are still seeking further advice from you on this matter and would appreciate some clarity on your views. Can you provide advice on our following observations:

- As indicated by the long title and the objects of the WMAct2000, (“An Act to provide for the protection, conservation and ecologically sustainable development of the water sources of the State, and for other purposes”) protecting waterways, conservation and ecologically sustainable development is front and centre of the Act.
- The water management principles in the WMAct2000 prioritise the protection of water sources and their dependent ecosystems over all other rights under the Act.
- So arguably, measures to protect fish and the ecology of our waterways from adverse impacts of irrigation activities ought to be taking priority over economic considerations when it comes to water use.
- It appears that in reality, the opposite is taking place.

The RFA understands that as Minister, you must ensure your Department reviews its work and activities every five years to assess how effective it has been in giving effect to the water management principles of the Act.

Can you provide advice on previous reviews, copies and how we can provide submissions to future reviews? Can you also advise if the reviews are conducted (or at least overseen) by an independent party—and if so, by whom?

Likewise, Management Plans made under the WMAct2000 (which have a life of 10 years) must be reviewed in the fifth year to assess whether they are effectively implementing the water management principles. Can you provide advice on previous reviews, copies and how we can

provide submissions to future reviews? Can you also advise if the reviews are conducted (or at least overseen) by an independent party—and if so, by whom?

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Konstantaras." The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Stan Konstantaras

President

Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW