

12 March 2020

D2020/23948

The Chairman  
Greater Sydney Regional Weed Committee  
PO Box 4515

RE: Special Biosecurity Zone for the management of invasive aquatic weed in the WaterNSW Sydney Drinking Water Catchment.

To the Chair,

I am writing to provide a supporting statement for the proposal by Shoalhaven City Council to establish a special biosecurity zone to assist the management of aquatic weeds within the declared Sydney Drinking Water Catchment.

Water NSW is responsible for managing and protecting the drinking water catchments for over 5 million people of Greater Sydney, the Illawarra, Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands and parts of the Shoalhaven region. Water is harvested over an area of approximately 16,000km<sup>2</sup> and can be transferred between geographical areas to different storages as required.

The area under WaterNSW responsibility is the declared Sydney Drinking Water Catchment as detailed in State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Drinking Water Catchment) 2011. The declared Sydney Drinking Water Catchment is basically land from which water runs into WaterNSW storages within the greater Sydney region. Maps of the declared drinking water catchment are found at <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/EPI/2011/28/maps>.

Aquatic weeds, including Alligator Weed and Water Hyacinth, weeds pose a serious risk to WaterNSW operations. If aquatic weeds can get established within the declared catchment they will inevitably find their way into our storages. This can severely impact the storage and transfer of water throughout our network of water supply dams, as well as the infrastructure related to the transfer and treatment of this water.

An example of the impact of aquatic weeds on our operations is a farm dam in Kangaroo Valley (South East LLS Region) containing water hyacinth overflowed during a period of heavy rainfall. Water Hyacinth was washed into our Lake Yarrunga storage. The cleanup for WaterNSW took over three years and required a significant amount of labour and follow up inspections to ensure we had eradicated it from the storage and the wider storage network of dams.

Water NSW believes the current exclusion of the declared drinking water catchment from the biosecurity zone set up under Part 5, div 4 of the Biosecurity Regulation fails to reflect the risk aquatic weeds pose to our operations.

Water NSW fully supports Shoalhaven Councils submission (D19/393318) to this committee and would like to thank them for their efforts in assisting us to facilitate increased protection of this critical infrastructure. We request the Greater Sydney Regional Weeds Committee support the regulatory measures proposed in Shoalhaven City Councils submission.

If you need further information on this matter, please contact Jacob Adams, Catchment Asset Officer Biosecurity on 0428 254 558.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Knowles".

Mary Knowles  
Catchment Manager