

PUMPED HYDRO

PUBLIC POLICY NEEDED

This is a submission to the NSW Government's Network Infrastructure Projects Policy Paper.

Water is our most precious resource in drought prone regions. Here, west of the Great Dividing Range in NSW we all know what it is like to be on level 5 water restrictions, and wondering if our water will run out completely.

Pumped hydro power stations can take large volumes of water away from domestic users and farmers, quarantining it to drive power plants, just like coal fired power stations do. Unlike conventional hydro where the water "passes through", this is to the exclusion of all other users of that water. Water that is otherwise available for domestic use is locked away forever. This gets worse as evaporation and transmission loss require more quarantined water every year.

Pumped Hydro does not make good public policy in drought prone regions. To allow that is highly questionable policy. Pumped hydro should only be located in high rainfall regions where water is not destined for other uses (e.g. Snowy mountains & Tasmania).

The NSW State Government, and the National Party because it represents people where pumped hydro might occur, must urgently develop public policy around the siting of pumped hydro.

This also is an imperative because pumped hydro uses around 20% more electricity than it creates.

We must be very careful how we use our precious resources.

The NSW State Government is to be commended in establishing the policy that solar power plants must not be located on prime agricultural land, because we as a society lose valuable food production when the ground is covered by panels.

Similarly, pumped hydro should not be located in naturally dry drought prone regions, because there the limited available water is so much more valuable for drinking and food production. Batteries should be used where power storage is required.

YETHOLME PUMPED HYDRO POWER PLANT

At Yetholme near Bathurst in NSW a \$500 million pumped hydro plant is proposed using water from Oberon Dam 40kms+ away, currently used to provide drinking water to the Blue Mountains and Sydney, plus water from a creek which runs into the Fish/Macquarie Rivers, currently used to provide drinking water to Bathurst.

Oberon and Bathurst are very drought prone districts, with irregular rainfall, and have been shown to become seriously affected when there are significant water shortages during drought.

To say that "the project keeps the water in the catchment" is completely beside the point. Yes, it stays in the region, but it is quarantined for the exclusive use of one multi-national company.

This proposal will lock up water otherwise very much needed for drinking, stock & domestic use.

The Yetholme proposal is fatally flawed, and authorities must not allow our precious water to be locked away.

Put your water ahead of their power.