



Hunter Environment Lobby Inc.

PO Box 188
East Maitland NSW 2323

Stephen Hunter
Water Trigger Review
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

Friday 29 January 2016

Dear Mr Hunter

Hunter Environment Lobby Inc. (HEL) is a regional community-based environmental organization that has been active for over 20 years on the issues of environmental degradation, species and habitat loss, and climate change.

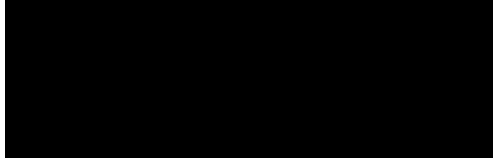
HEL has particular interest in water and aquifer management issues in the Hunter Region and has held positions on the Hunter River Management Committee and the Hunter and Paterson Environmental Water Advisory Group.

We wish to provide the following brief comments on the review of the water trigger regulation under the EPBC Act:

1. The regulation is a very important piece of legislation that must be strengthened to ensure that regional water sources are protected from permanent damage caused by large scale coal mining and coal seam gas operations.
2. The Hunter River system has suffered significant cumulative impacts from a long history of poorly regulated mining activities. The water trigger regulation needs more powers to prevent any further irreversible damage from occurring in our region.
3. Advice provided by the Independent Expert Science Committee under the regulation must be given mandatory requirements to be adopted by NSW decision-makers.
4. HEL is particularly concerned about the long term cumulative impacts of final voids in the Hunter landscape, the cracking of creek beds through long wall subsidence, the interception of alluvial aquifer systems, the loss of base flows to the Hunter River and the increasing level of background salinity and discharge of heavy metals and metaloids into the river system.
5. A comprehensive analysis of the damage occurring through past and present mining operations needs to be conducted in the Hunter Region. We consider the IESC is the best body to carry out this important study.
6. HEL recommends that the water trigger be extended to include all activities relating to water use, storage and transfer through pipes as well as all proposed expansion or modifications of existing development.

7. The regulation should also mandate exclusion zones to prevent further permanent destruction of important water sources in the Hunter Region.

Yours sincerely



Jan Davis
President