

27 November 2018

Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte
Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer
GPO Box 5477
SYDNEY NSW 2001



Via email: nswchiefscientist@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au
CC: Bruce Ritchie, [REDACTED]
Shae Courtney, Shae@ausbev.org

Dear Professor Durrant-Whyte,

Re: Northern Rivers Groundwater Review

I write in reference to the independent review into the impacts of the bottled water industry on groundwater sources in the Northern Rivers, announced last week by the Minister for Regional Water, the Hon. Niall Blair, MLC.

The Australian Beverages Council is the peak body representing the non-alcoholic beverage industry in Australia. Our dedicated water division, the Australasian Bottled Water Institute [ABWI], is the peak certification body for bottled water standards covering both bottlers and source owners across Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. By volume, ABWI represents approximately 90 per cent of bottled and packaged water in this country.

We are concerned the current debate about the responsible extraction of groundwater by our Members in the Northern Rivers region is lacking critical factual context. As the industry peak body, we take these issues extremely seriously and it is important to note that all Members of ABWI adhere to current water licence regulations and legal frameworks.

The bottled water industry responsibly manages groundwater sources and ABWI-certified source owners are required to ensure the sustainability of their water source(s). Initial pre-certification and regular ongoing hydrogeology reports on the health of each source and adherence to the ABWI Model Code are non-negotiable criteria of ABWI membership.

It is our belief that both agricultural activities and water extraction, both of which make important social and economic contributions to NSW, can and should continue to coexist across NSW, as they have for many decades.

It is also important to note the economic contributions of the water industry to NSW and Australia, which have been entirely absent from the current debate.

The bottled and packaged water industry contributes more than \$520 million to the national economy per annum and supports more than 3,200 jobs across the industry and in the supply chain. More than half the value-add activities and jobs are in NSW. Many of these jobs are in local communities and regional towns, as well as in major metropolitan areas, such as Sydney.

Lastly, I am confident that the review to be carried out by your Office will be thorough and fair in its appraisal of water extraction for the bottled and packaged water industry, and we look forward to contributing our expertise to the review as required.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mr Shae Courtney, my Public Affairs Manager, on [REDACTED] or via Shae@ausbev.org for further information or to arrange a suitable time for a meeting at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoff Parker".

Geoff Parker
Chief Executive Officer

