



24th April 2026

National Water Reform 2026
Productivity Commission

Dear National Water Form Committee,

RE: SUBMISSION ON THE 2026 NATIONAL WATER REFORM

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on National Water Reform.

Coolum and North Shore Coast Care is a community lead conservation group which formed in 1998 and was Incorporated in 2000. We have approximately 300 members.

Our Mission Statement

- *To protect and conserve the natural values of the coastal area between South Peregian and Mudjimba.*
- *To encourage the preservation of this area's biodiversity*
- *To encourage active participation of the community and governing bodies*

Our organisation agrees that Australia faces water challenges. We inhabit a very dry continent, are undergoing accelerating impacts of climate change, have a rapidly increasing population and increasing water reliant technology. Future water security planning is indeed very complex. The emerging evidence of the risks of pollutants both known and unknown to the both environment and human health need to be urgently considered and addressed by all levels of government.

Water supply and more importantly water quality in waste discharge are already posing serious problems in Australia. Currently, our rivers and oceans are being used for the disposal of unwanted waste with the consequences to the environment and public health becoming increasingly obvious.

Understandably, the focus on infrastructure, cost and drinking water quality is paramount particularly in remote and rural Australia. However, current pricing, economic regulation and governance arrangements, from Coolum and North Shore Coast Care (CaNSCC) perspective are failing to deliver long term environmental sustainability especially in relation to micropollutants, storm water and waste water discharge.



CaNSCC recommends that the terms of the enquiry and the National Water Agreement also encompass a strategy to remove micro pollutants from the environment to make water recycling potable as is happening elsewhere in the world.

For this to be achieved there needs to be a three-tiered, collaborative approach to prove the technology exists and is safe. Public trust needs to be established using evidence-based science, as outlined in Objective 5 and 6 in the NWA. The current draft document needs to include a pathway to more effective removal of micropollutants to improve outflow water quality.

River and ocean water quality is noticeably deteriorating. Using improved water treatment technologies to remove toxic pollutants from our waterways will increase public confidence, which in turn could lead to the possibility of communities using potable recycled water.

Transparency regarding pollutant and micropollutants levels in waterways is essential to build public trust. The ability for public to be able to access information via a centralised data base is essential. The NWA should adopt a goal to work towards a zero- pollutant level. A continuous upgrade of WWTP's needs to be urgently undertaken to allay community concerns regarding pollutant loads in our waterways.

The success of the NWA will require a collective effort from all levels of government, traditional owners, community and industry and will be critical to water security and health outcomes of Australians.

Regards,

President