

The Hon. Adam Marshall MP
Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales
52 Martin Place
Sydney
NSW 2000

By Email:

3 March 2021

Dear Minister,

RE: NSW Government funding cut consequences to Nepean River and Australia's Olympic and Paralympic rowers and the New South Wales rowing community

I write to you to express Rowing Australia's (RA) concern about the New South Wales (NSW) State Government funding cut which will have significant consequences for the aquatic weed control on the Hawkesbury-Nepean River.

The Nepean River has been home to rowing in NSW for nearly a hundred years, hosting everything from King's and Queen's Cup Interstate Regattas and National Championships to daily training opportunities for Australia's School, Club and Elite rowers.

Currently, the river plays an integral role in preparing Australia's elite female athletes, based at the Hancock Prospecting Women's National Training Centre (NTC) in Penrith. One of the major reasons that NSW Government's bid was successful in having the NTC built in Penrith, on the banks of Nepean, was due to the quality of the Nepean River and its uninterrupted 12 kilometre stretch of water for training for our current and aspiring Olympians.

The river is also extensively used by our athletes seeking selection to the Paralympic Games, including Penrith-local, two-time Paralympic silver medallist and five-time World Champion, Erik Horrie.

The NSW Government's withdrawal of \$238,000 of funding for the remainder of the financial year means that the Hawkesbury River City Council are unable to continue its weed management of the river and thus preventing it from maintaining the safe Daily Training Environment for our elite athletes and wider rowing community. The removal of this funding has the potential to impact staffing to manage the weed control along with the maintenance of the giant weed harvester.

With excessive weed growing in the river, rowers oars regularly get tangled in the plants, with the potential for boats to capsize and individuals to be put in peril. Additionally, the substantial weed prevents safety boats from accessing the river safely, as they also get caught in the weed.

We note that the Federal Government has contributed to the repairing and refurbishing of the giant harvester after it was damaged in a flood in 2020, however the NSW State Government as we now understand are not willing to contribute to maintaining the operational funding of the equipment which is vital to ensure that the river remains a safe and healthy waterway for all to utilise.

As Minister for Agriculture, we seek your intervention in the matter to reinstate the much needed funding to maintain the weed harvesting program run by the HRCC. We look forward to a positive outcome in this matter and the river returning to a safe environment for all to utilise.

Yours sincerely,



IAN ROBSON

Chief Executive

E: irobson@rowingaustralia.com.au

CC

Sen The Hon Richard Colbeck, Federal Minister for Sport
The Hon Melissa McIntosh MP, Federal Member for Lindsay
The Hon Stuart Ayres MP, Minister for Western Sydney and Member for Penrith
Councillor Nathan Zamprogno, Hawkesbury River City Council
Chris Dewhurst, General Manager Hawkesbury River City Council
Anne Gripper, Executive Officer, NSW Office of Sport and Recreation
Kevin Thompson, CEO, NSW Institute of Sport
Margot Harley, CEO, Rowing NSW