



Nature Conservation Council

The voice for nature in NSW

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: ec.sen@aph.gov.au

13 October 2014

Submission to the inquiry on the National Water Commission (Abolition) Bill 2014

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) welcomes the opportunity to provide input into this important Senate inquiry. The National Water Commission (the Commission) holds a unique, cornerstone position in the governance arrangements for the management and sharing of bulk water in Australia, and NCC believes it should continue to be resourced in that role.

NCC notes that the Commission was established following the Competition Policy reforms undertaken up to 2004, partly in recognition that the Productivity Commission was not positioned to drive the establishment of an integrated set of economic and regulatory reforms in bulk water management. Nothing has changed that would suggest this is not still the case. The NCC also notes that the 2011 COAG review of the operation of the Commission concluded that “(t)here remains a clear need for an independent expert body to drive that national reform agenda ...”.

Whilst there is scope for the partial redistribution of some of the Commission’s responsibilities regarding economic instruments (specifically water markets and water pricing), the Commission is unique in its ability to independently provide oversight on the progress of all jurisdictions in their roles contributing to sustainable water sharing arrangements, and to report to the general public on that progress. There are no other bodies with the same level of political independence and expert knowledge, that has the public’s confidence, and that could hold governments at all levels to account for the sustainable management of this essential resource.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this brief submission. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 9516 1488 or ncc@nature.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Smolski
Chief Executive Officer