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13 October 2014

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

Dear Committee Secretary,

RE: Submission – National Water Commission Abolition Bill

I write to you on behalf of Stormwater Queensland – the peak industry association for stormwater in Queensland. The purpose of Stormwater Queensland is to promote the efficient management of stormwater. In addition, Stormwater Queensland supports the efficient and sustainable (economically, socially and environmentally) management of all forms of water.

Water is one of Australia's most precious resources. It underpins every facet of Australian life, from what comes out of the tap, to the food on our plates, and the businesses (such as farms, industry and tourism operators) who rely on affordable and reliable access to water to run their businesses and underpin our economy.

The National Water Initiative, facilitated by the National Water Commission (NWC), provides the opportunity to augment the economically, socially and environmentally efficient management of water in Australia. We believe the NWC has played an important role in advancing total water cycle management and water sensitive urban design in Australia.

Stormwater Queensland opposes the abolition of the NWC for the following reasons:

- Water is vital to the long term prosperity and health of Australians and its ecosystems. It has historically been poorly managed in Australia.
- Water does not respect state boundaries, and therefore needs a strong body that can act in the national interest.
- Governance of the various aspects of water (water supply, flooding, stormwater, wastewater) is fragmented and needs a coordinating body to achieve total water cycle management.
- The Productivity Commission, while fulfilling an important role, does not oversee programs or provide ongoing leadership, and is therefore not an appropriate body to fulfil roles currently performed by the National Water Commission.
- The proposed cost savings associated with abolishing the NWC is estimated at \$20.9 million over the next four years. We believe the economic costs of abolishing the NWC, in terms of inefficient water management, are likely to far outweigh that cost.



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We thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the National Water Commission Abolition Bill. Should you have any questions or would like to discuss the matter further, please contact myself or Jack Mullaly of the Stormwater Queensland Advocacy and Engagement Sub-Committee (p: (07) 3177 9110 or jack.mullaly@healthywaterways.org).

Kind regards

Brad Dalrymple
President
Stormwater Queensland