



In reply quote:

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

3 March 2020

Senate Select Committee on the Multi-Jurisdictional Management and
Execution of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Email: murraydarlingplan.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

SUBMISSION: SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTION OF THE MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Select Committee.

Griffith City Council agrees that the Commonwealth Government's Water Act 2007 and the Murray Darling Basin Plan is a mechanism for providing a coordinated approach to water use across the Murray Darling Basin's four states and the ACT. It is a major step forward in managing Australia's water resource, by setting use at an environmentally sustainable level. While the need for water reform across the Basin, initiated by the Water Act 2007 is beyond question, communities have become frustrated and angry. Individuals, communities and businesses do not trust the multiple jurisdictions responsible for managing water to do so in a responsible and efficient way. The governance of water is far too complex for the community to understand even at the most rudimentary level. This lack of understanding of the governance of water is a major impediment to stakeholders coming to some form of consensus as to a way forward.

The following are some proposed reforms:

Water Governance Jurisdictions - In NSW alone there are four primary agencies responsible for developing and implementing the regulatory framework for water management in the regions. This should be rationalised.

Water Trading - The creation of an open market system for water trading under the principle that water should find its way to the highest value use is supported by Council. The separation of water from productive land however, has led to some negative consequences such as profit gouging by non-primary producer water traders. The Australian Consumer and Competition

Commission's review of the water trading market will examine this and other important issues and is supported by Council.

Water Carry Over Provisions - Are heavily weighted towards large corporate entities and these rules should be reviewed.

Environment Water Flows - There is a lack of transparency by the Murray Darling Basin Authority, Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder and State Government Departments in terms of what measures are or should be in place to demonstrate the effectiveness of its environmental water allocations and time of flows across the Basin. All water utilised across the Basin should be subject to consistent measurement whether that be consumptive use or environmental flows. The following principle should apply to all water across the Basin: "No meter no water".

Water Infrastructure Investment - Council supports the establishment of a Sovereign Wealth Fund at the Federal Government level, complemented by a long term plan to sustain Australia across all environmental, social and economic sectors now and into the future.

Transmission Losses - Where water is sold inter-valley, the upstream licence holder should be liable for all or part of water transmission losses.

I would appreciate the opportunity to address the Senate Select Sub-Committee at a hearing when these are scheduled during 2020. I look forward to your response in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

CR JOHN DAL BROI
MAYOR