

SUBMISSION BY IAN BOYLE
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF COMMONWEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL WATER

Under the Water Act the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder is responsible to ensure that environmental watering does not take place if it affects water quality. This problem has been brought to attention of the Commonwealth Water Holder many times without any result.

The MDBA has from the beginning of the MDB Plan been told by the Basin Communities that making man made floods or extending flood events has a detrimental effect on water quality and on the environment. Every time environmental watering take place on wetlands and forests and run off is allowed back into the main channel water quality is badly affected.

Our scientists told our farmers years ago that allowing irrigation water to run back into the main river system degraded water quality. Based on this advice our irrigators spent millions of dollars building holding dams to ensure this didn't happen. The same rules apply to environmental watering. The Water Act specifically states that environmental watering cannot take place if it affects water quality. The MDBA has the data and knows that this is happening and chooses to do nothing about it. The MDBA has the responsibility to ensure that all environmental watering is carried out in a way that does not negatively affect water quality or the environment. The MDBA has failed its duty in this regard.

The recent flood event in 2016 has shown how devastating floods are to the environment and water quality. They were the cause of one of the worst Black Water events we have seen that stretch from the upper reaches of the Murray system even into SA. In addition large numbers of old growth trees along the main channel had their root systems washed out by the flood waters and many of those in our forest simple fell over in the wind because their root systems could not hold them up in the water logged soil. Our native fish were killed and our marine life badly effected. Water quality was so bad it could not be used for stock and domestic use. The MDBA knows about this but continues to do nothing to correct the way they carry out environmental watering. The MDBA is in breach of its duties and responsibilities to ensure our Billions of dollars of taxpayer dollars being spent improves the environment not harm it.

And of course lets not worry about the basin communities and the devastating social and economic effect their plan has imposed on them and the mental health issues the MDBA has caused by ignoring their feed back and input.

Since Environmental watering by the MDB Plan has started we have had worst water quality issues than before including

- More Black water events and Blue Green Algae warning than ever before.
- Water quality in the upper reaches of the Murray system being negatively affected every time watering of wetland and forests occurs.
- Major native fish kills have occurred and even birds dying through drinking the water.
- Farmers who rely on the water quality for stock and domestic use have to make alternative water arrangements during Red Blue Green Algae alerts. A red blue green algae alert means not only that you cannot drink the water but you cannot even use it to shower in. Imagine if this happened in our cities. If government just issued one of these warnings and people in say Melbourne or Sydney not only couldn't drink the water but could not shower in it. It's just unimaginable but this is what happens on a regular basis within the Murray Darling Basin. Nothing is done to modify environmental watering. The MDBA and the Commonwealth Water Holder continue to breach the Water Act, which clearly states that environmental watering cannot take place if it affects water quality.