

**SUBMISSION ON THE USE OF ENVIRONMENTAL WATER IN PRIVATE/PUBLIC WETLAND
RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP**

To the

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES INQUIRY ON THE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF COMMONWEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL WATER**

From

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**THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES INQUIRY ON THE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF
COMMONWEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL WATER**

Submission on the use of environmental water in private/public wetland restoration partnerships

As owners of two Murray Riverine properties which my wife and I have dedicated to landscape and biodiversity restoration, I wish to briefly outline the importance and value of environmental water to our actions and consequently the biodiversity value to the community.

The first property is located on a floodplain in northern Victoria and contains a complex of varying wetland types that are being rotationally flooded using the former irrigation channel network on the property.

This is a Trust for Nature (Victoria) covenanted property and we have entered into an ongoing agreement with the North Central Catchment Management Authority, Victorian Environmental Water Holder and Goulburn-Murray Water to restore and maintain the wetlands. This program started in 2015 and has produced amazing results.

The photographs below show an example of before and after of wetland recovery this property.



The first environmental water enters a stressed redgum and lignum swamp.



The same scene seven months later showing the benefits of environmental water.

In Nov 2017 *Litoria Raniformas* (Growling Grass Frog), a nationally threatened species was recorded in our wetland. This frog had not been recorded in the floodplain area for more than 10 years.

The two photographs below show the restored wetland where this frog was recorded:





Several other listed species of flora and fauna have been recorded, e.g. *Platalea regia* (Royal spoonbill), *ardea intermedia* (Intermediate Egret) and Stiff Groundsel.

The use of relatively small volumes of environmental water in this private/public partnership have shown there is definitely an ongoing need for environmental water for our property as well as the potential to enhance biodiversity benefits by expanding the network of this type of wetland restoration across the floodplains.

The other property is located on a southern New South Wales floodplain. Our plan is to restore the various floodplain ecological vegetation classes on this land. With the financial assistance of Murray Local Land Services we have prepared detailed plans to this end.

Part of the flood dependent ecosystem restoration is to be achieved by restoration of natural flood flows, however the use of environmental water will be needed to replicate the small flood flows that once frequently fed the reedy redgum wetland depression. This wetland area is not large but typical of many forest depressions that regularly received flooding from small floods now mostly denied by river regulation. The use of environmental water is the only way to restore these reedy eco-systems.

The two photographs below show the before and after of the initial restoration we started in 2006 on part of the redgum area using water pumped under our unregulated stream licences.



Anecdotally this area once grew a dense stand of reeds that required frequent flooding to maintain their vigour.

Without doubt there is a great need for large volumes of environmental water to be used in icon sites such as Gunbower Island, but we believe the future will see more smaller-scale projects, probably mostly private/public partnerships dotted across the floodplains that will produce great biodiversity benefits and complement the restoration and management of the icon sites.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this submission. I trust it may be of help in your deliberations.

Ken Hooper.