

Dear Committee Secretary,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Senate Inquiry into the Provisions of the Water Act.2007.

- 1) The initiative taken by the then Howard Government, was a truly courageous one, in a period of drought, with the anticipation of some drastic realities being brought upon some thousands of farmers, families and supporting communities.
- 2) The irresponsible issuing of limitless water licences by successive state governments across three states had led to a climate of entitlement that would be hard to claw back.
- 3) The severe drought suffered by almost all across Australia, and the accumulated impact of years of excessive extraction of water culminated in the loss of almost all the floodplain wetlands, huge reductions in waterbird populations, and most of our River Red Gum forests.
- 4) While many may point to the partial recovery of some areas impacted by the recent heavy rains, we cannot, must not retreat from the recommendations of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, set forward in the Water Act 2007.
- 5) The terms of reference provided to the scientists formulating the plan required rigorous examination of the measures to be taken to restore the Murray-Darling Basin to environmentally sustainable levels of the ecosystem.
- 6) The resultant plan fulfilled its mandate, with recognition that a compromise had been necessary for community and towns impacted.
- 7) There can be not further reductions in the environmental provisions that have been included to guide the the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.
- 8) This plan is possibly the last chance our great system has to achieve community and environmental balance into our grandchildren's future and beyond.

Thank you again for this opportunity,

Your truly,

Robyn R. O'Bryan