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18 March 2011

INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISIONS OF THE WATER ACT 2007

NPANSW is the leading non-government NSW association concerned primarily to advocate for the conservation and function of our natural areas as critical to underpin the health, wellbeing and enjoyment of our communities across the State.

We have a particular and proud legacy of involvement in western NSW. Directly, and through our involvement as a Member Group of the Inland Rivers Network, we have been working to promote the health of our inland river and wetland systems for over fifty years.

As an organisation with many members across NSW, our work has included advocacy for the protection and sustainable management of our significant inland wetlands, including sites listed under the Ramsar Convention for their international importance: areas such as the Macquarie Marshes, the Gwydir Wetlands and the Red Gum Moira wetlands region. We have been dismayed by the evidence of declining health in the face of years of increased water extraction.

Accordingly we submit that:

- The Water Act 2007 is a positive step forward towards implementing a robust framework for management of the Murray Darling Basin;
- The Act builds on widespread acceptance, as evidenced in COAG deliberations and under the National Water Initiative, of the need to re-address the declining health of the wetland and river systems of the Basin;
- The Act properly provides for a sustainable regime of water extraction in accordance with the best available science;
- The Act also properly provides for the development of a scientifically robust framework that takes into account community wellbeing and economic needs.

We support the submission of NPA South Sydney Branch, and fully concur in its conclusion that the only alternative to environmentally sustainable extraction levels is unsustainable extraction levels. That would be the death knell for a river system, for the communities along it and for the industries that rely on that river system.

Yours faithfully,

Graeme Wiffen, BA, LL.M., President

Kevin Evans, Executive Officer