

Sarah Moles,

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By email to ec.sen@aph.gov.au

I wish to register my support for the Murray-Darling Basin Commission of Inquiry Bill 2019. There is nothing confidential in my submission and I consent to it being made public if accepted.

I am an individual member of the Lifeblood Alliance and have been a community representative involved in water reform in the MDB since the early 1990s. I was a member of the MDB Commission's Community Advisory Committee 4 in the early 2000s. We toured the Northern Basin to test support for an initiative to complement The Living Murray and found a pleasing level of support. I have absolutely no doubt that many in the communities we visited are utterly appalled at how the MDB water reform process has actually unfolded.

I agreed to participate in the Northern Basin Community Advisory Committee process as I thought the political will existed to secure an equitable future for Basin rivers. How naïve. Water has become too valuable for that so the science continues to be ignored.

Unfettered water trading has been a disaster. Corporate irrigators don't support local communities and running rivers artificially high to meet their needs is causing environmental harm.

Images of millions of dead fish outraged people around the world. Hundreds of thousands of horrified Australian taxpayers who want to see value for money are sick of dodgy deals and nepotism derailing the process. Basin communities want a Plan that actually delivers healthy rivers and resilient and sustainable communities. Communities on the rivers and in some Basin towns just want water that is fit to drink. Everyone is sick and tired of seemingly endless Clayton's consultation and deaf decision makers' ears.

The South Australian Royal Commission exposed numerous flaws in the implementation of the MDB Plan. It is significant that the Royal Commission process was itself significantly weakened by legal action to prevent Commonwealth staff from giving evidence. Their inter-jurisdictional colleagues need to be heard. Getting water governance across the Basin right is of the utmost importance. The knowledge held by indigenous people is priceless.

I sincerely hope that this Inquiry is established to undertake a forensic examination of the MDB Plan process in other Basin jurisdictions, at all levels of government and to ensure any wrong doers are held accountable for their actions.

There is nothing more important to the long term future of this country than fair, equitable, just, transparent and accountable - and above all - sustainable water management. In order to get the MDB Plan back on track we have to get water reform done - and done right.

Yours sincerely

