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## **NSW Irrigators' Council**

### **SUBMISSION**

# **Murray-Darling Basin Commission of Inquiry Bill 2019**

26 July 2019



## **NSW Irrigators' Council**

The NSW Irrigators' Council (NSWIC) is the peak body representing irrigation farmers and the irrigation farming industry in NSW. Our Members include valley water user associations, food and fibre groups, irrigation corporations and commodity groups from the rice, cotton, dairy and horticultural industries. Through our members, NSWIC represents over 12,000 water access licence holders in NSW who access regulated, unregulated and groundwater systems.

NSWIC engages in advocacy and policy development on behalf of the irrigation farming sector. As an apolitical entity, the Council provides advice to all stakeholders and decision makers.

Irrigation farmers are stewards of tremendous local, operational and practical knowledge in water management. With over 12,000 irrigation farmers in NSW, there is a wealth of knowledge available. To best utilise this knowledge requires participatory decision making and extensive consultation to ensure this knowledge can be incorporated into best-practice, evidence-based policy. NSWIC and our Members are a valuable way for Governments and agencies to access this knowledge.

This submission represents the views of the Members of NSWIC with respect to *Murray-Darling Basin Commission of Inquiry Bill 2019*. Each member reserves the right to independent policy on issues that directly relate to their areas of operation, expertise or any other issues that they deem relevant.



## NSW Irrigators' Council's Guiding Principles

Integrity	Leadership	Evidence	Collaboration
<p>Environmental health and sustainable resource access is integral to a successful irrigation industry.</p>	<p>Irrigation farmers in NSW and Australia are world leaders in water-efficient production with high ethical and environmental standards.</p>	<p>Evidence-based policy is essential. Research must be on-going, and include review mechanisms, to ensure the best-available data can inform best-practice policy through adaptive processes.</p>	<p>Irrigation farmers are stewards of tremendous knowledge in water management, and extensive consultation is needed to utilise this knowledge.</p>
<p>Water property rights (including accessibility, reliability and their fundamental characteristics) must be protected regardless of ownership.</p>	<p>Developing leadership will strengthen the sector and ensure competitiveness globally.</p>	<p>Innovation is fostered through research and development.</p>	<p>Government and industry must work together to ensure communication is informative, timely, and accessible.</p>
<p>Certainty and stability is fundamental for all water users.</p>	<p>Industry has zero tolerance for water theft.</p>	<p>Decision-making must ensure no negative unmitigated third-party impacts, including understanding cumulative and socio-economic impacts.</p>	<p>Irrigation farmers respect the prioritisation of water in the allocation framework.</p>
<p>All water (agricultural, environmental, cultural and industrial) must be measured, and used efficiently and effectively.</p>			<p>Collaboration with indigenous nations improves water management.</p>



## Overview

NSWIC does NOT support this Bill as it is a duplication of existing work, and likely to only distract from the measured implementation of the Basin Plan to meet the Plans critical objectives.

NSWIC would welcome an inquiry if there was an identified gap in the knowledge that has not already been reviewed. However, given the breadth of current or previous inquiries/reviews already addressing the Terms of Reference, focus should be on implementing the numerous existing recommendations provided by these reviews.

*The Basin needs action on implementation – not another inquiry.*

### In summary, we recommend:

1. The Committee recommend that the Senate **reject** the bill,
2. The Committee should note the numerous reviews already undertaken (e.g. the Productivity Commission has completed a comprehensive five-year review of the Basin Plan) and focus on taking action to respond to those recommendations as a basis for sound implementation of the remainder of the Plan.

NSWIC forms this position on the basis that it is critical that sufficient knowledge is available to inform evidence-based policy, but it is equally important the findings and recommendations are actually addressed.

In recent times, **there has been over 37 reviews/inquiries/commissions** (see Appendix 1) which have produced information on a broad scope of topics. The critical need now, is not for more inquiries, but to actually respond to the recommendations from these reviews in order to implement the Basin Plan in an adaptive, evidence-based and optimal manner.

NSWIC believes it is mere duplication, unnecessary, costly, inflammatory and will be generally unproductive to improving the environmental or community concerns in the Basin. Further reviews would also cause anxiety in rural communities already fatigued by water reform and now experiencing extreme drought.

NSWIC holds firm positions about the need for sound processes, due diligence and transparency in the delivery of Government programs. However, it is unlikely yet another inquiry would find anything new, but would only distract and potentially set-back from the most critical issue – actually implementing the Basin Plan and other measures in the best possible way.



## CONTEXT

### Murray-Darling Basin Plan

To be clear on the NSWIC position:

*NSWIC supports measured implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan for stability.*

NSWIC does not believe that the Basin Plan itself, nor implementation of the Basin Plan is perfect, but we recognise that it is a unique, bi-partisan, and world-leading agreement that is the product of a long process of negotiations and compromises, and that must be respected.

To date, the Basin Plan is only 7 years into the 12 year Plan. Already, 20% of water extraction by farmers has ceased and is now used for environmental benefits. Already, surface water recovery in the Basin is at 2082GL per year out of the target of 2750GL. Already, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder has used more than 9,000 billion litres of water for environmental watering events.

The Basin Plan is a huge sacrifice from our farmers – but it also mapped the pathway to objectives for healthy rivers and communities which our farmers support, and it represented stability and certainty for communities involved in its development. It was for that reason that farmers have supported the Plan in good-faith, and now Governments have a responsibility to (a) maintain the bipartisan commitment for its implementation, and (b) to use the findings and recommendations from numerous reviews to implement it in the best way.

It is unique to have an environmental water recovery plan of this nature, which is supported by the agricultural industry and both sides of politics - significant consideration must be given to the need to ensure the implementation of the Plan can progress whilst maintaining (and not jeopardising) this support. Support from the agricultural industry is critical to the very success of the Basin Plan being implemented, and focus must now shift to developing sound policy from available knowledge for optimal implementation. We cannot take for granted the support of farmers in the Basin, which without, would unfortunately risk the very future of this environmental framework continuing. NSWIC and many other agricultural peak bodies in the Basin are maintaining our commitment to the Basin Plan, and we must see that commitment reflected by Government.

There are undoubtedly many frustrations surrounding the Basin Plan, but those frustrations are only going to be settled through constructive, reasoned, logical and genuine actions to see real improvements – not by generating ever more angst by re-treading the same territory.

*We have vast recommendations already developed on how Basin water resources can be managed better, and now we have to respond to those recommendations, and get on with taking constructive and reasonable steps to implement the Basin Plan in the best possible way.*



## Worst drought in recorded history

The Bureau of Meteorology has now confirmed the current drought is the worst in recorded history.<sup>1</sup> Water NSW has detailed that there have been less than 1% of typical inflows into the Basin. This is a significant reduction in total Basin water resources. There are now towns in the Basin facing real concerns of running out of water and approaching the 'Day 0' where towns run dry. The situation of water insecurity in the Basin is dire and desperate. There is no time to wait around and do another inquiry when we already have the findings and actions on hand. This requires constructive and reasoned action.



*Figure 1: Near Walgett (NSW) in the upper NW Murray-Darling Basin – December 2018.*



*Figure 2: Near Uralla (NSW) in the upper NE Murray-Darling Basin – July 2019.*

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<sup>1</sup>Australian Government, Bureau of Meteorology: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/drought/>



The critical situation of extreme drought is important context for consideration for a Commission of Inquiry for a number of reasons:

- 1)** The Committee must distinguish between the impacts of the extreme drought and any perceived wrong-doing. Whilst there will always be ways water can be managed better, it is difficult to manage water when the water simply isn't there. The drought has had significant impacts on the environment, rural communities and our agricultural sector. The scope of the drought, and the impacts from the drought, must be identified and fully recognised by the Committee in determining whether a Commission of Inquiry is warranted.
- 2)** The Committee must be cognisant of the current way water management requires farmers to change their water use as water availability changes. This is a framework respected by industry to ensure water goes to the highest priority need, so that farmers only get what is leftover. NSWIC wishes to remind the Committee that most irrigation farmers (general-security) have not been able to get water onto their farms for over 2 years. When there are water shortages, the percentage of a water licence that can be used is reduced, and because of this extreme drought, farmers in most valleys in the NSW Murray-Darling Basin remain on 0% of their allocations – that is, without water.<sup>2</sup> In short – many forms of irrigation in the Basin have effectively ceased under the current drought, in order to ensure the little water that is available goes to critical human needs and the environment.
- 3)** Farmers and rural communities amidst the devastating drought are at breaking point, and the timing of calling for this Commission of Inquiry is incredibly insensitive. Water reforms and inquiries are an incredibly sensitive topic given the significant negative impacts on communities. Communities are desperate to see constructive actions taken to improve water security outcomes, and they are desperate to see confidence by the Government and public in the way water is managed. A Commission of Inquiry would only add to the frustrations and stress already felt by farmers; be inflammatory to fuel the angst and lack of confidence by the general public towards water management in the Basin; show reckless insensitivity to those facing the extreme drought; whilst distracting from opportunity to remedy the situation through reasoned and constructive action.

## Key Points

### What has been done already?

*Action not inquiry: There has already been at least 37 Government or external reviews to date*

*We know what the issues are for the Murray-Darling Basin, and we have a range of published recommendations for how to constructively address them – we don't need a Royal Commission to tell us again.*

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<sup>2</sup> NSW Government, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. "Summary of current water allocations". <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/allocations/summary>



It is only worthwhile conducting an inquiry of this nature (powers of a Royal Commission), if there is a clear gap in knowledge which is otherwise unaddressed by previous or ongoing reviews, or that could not simply be addressed through less drastic (time-consuming, and costly) means. Given there has already been over 37 reviews/inquiries/commissions conducted on the Basin in recent times, it is doubtful that there is new territory that has not already been covered. Rather than adding to the existing constructive recommendations already available, it is likely this Commission of Inquiry would only be inflammatory, and further weaken public confidence in the way water is managed - unnecessarily risking public support for the world-leading measures only partly implemented in the Basin.

NSWIC note in the Bill that:

*“The Commission is not required to inquire, or to continue to inquire, into a particular matter to the extent that it is satisfied that the matter has been, is being, or will be, sufficiently and appropriately dealt with by:*

*(a) another inquiry or investigation”*

Given the 37 reviews already undertaken largely duplicate the matters raised in the Terms of Reference, it is likely this Commission of Inquiry would either be very narrow, or duplicate existing efforts whereby we already have recommendations ready for action.

For example, recent and ongoing reviews - such as the *Productivity Commissions Five Year Review of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan Report*, the *Vertessy Report into the Menindee Fish Deaths*, the *Independent Assessment of Social and Economic Conditions of the Basin*, the *External review of the Environmental Watering Plan (EWP) of the Basin Plan*, and even the *South Australian Royal Commission*, to name a few from the previous 12 months – have already covered a broad scope of areas listed in the Bill. **Most of these recommendations are yet to receive any action.**

In particular, the *Productivity Commissions Five Year Review of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan Report* clearly defined constructive and feasible areas for improvement, and provided a comprehensive road-map for further implementation of the Basin Plan.

*Focus must turn to measured implementation of the Basin Plan for stability.*

**Recommendation A)** NSWIC believes Senator Hanson-Young must clearly articulate exactly what gaps the Inquiry would seek to address, and explain how these are not already addressed by existing/current reviews.

**Recommendation B)** NSWIC recommends that a taskforce of independent consultants be established to undertake an analysis of the 37 or more Basin Plan reviews undertaken to date. The purpose of the analysis would be to pull together the findings from these reviews and devise an improved process for delivery of the Basin Plan. A key objective should be to determine a manner for future Basin Plan implementation that does not result in *further* negative social, economic or environmental impacts.

**Recommendation C)** NSWIC recommends adoption of the recommendations from the *Productivity Commissions Five Year Review of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan Report*.





*A large program of work is already underway to improve many of the areas of concern*

In recent times, there have been a range of new measures commenced, or close to commencement, in response to many of the areas identified in the Terms of Reference. Whilst there will always be more work to be done, the Committee must be mindful that we cannot expect to see radical change overnight, and thus must note the existing work before commencing an Inquiry of this magnitude. For example:

<b>Terms of Reference</b>	<b>Action commenced, or close to commencement.</b>
<b><i>Any misconduct relating to, or affecting, the management of the Basin water resources</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In response to the Matthews Inquiry, there has been an overhaul of water compliance in NSW, with the establishment of the <b>Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR)</b>. There are firm, and strictly enforced compliance standards for water use (as highly supported by industry).</li> <li>• The NSW Government has committed to a new <b>Water Reform Action Plan</b> - a robust new metering framework to improve the standard and coverage of non-urban water meters across NSW, which commenced on 1 December 2018.</li> <li>• The <b>Basin Plan Compliance Compact</b> was endorsed in December 2018 by the Council of Australian Governments, which sets out the compliance implementation framework which each jurisdiction must meet.</li> <li>• The Australian National Audit Office is conducting an <b>audit of the procurement of strategic water entitlements</b>, which is due to report in December 2019.</li> </ul>
<b><i>The legislative and administrative framework for implementing, managing and enforcing the Basin Plan</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These were identified in the <b>Productivity Commission Murray-Darling Basin Plan five-year assessment</b> – see Chapter 14<sup>3</sup> which provides detailed analysis on the legislative and administrative framework for implementing, managing and enforcing the Basin Plan, as well as 5 recommendations.</li> </ul>
<b><i>The impact that the implementation, management and enforcement of the Basin Plan has had on the environment, agriculture and communities that rely on the Basin water resources;</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An <b>Independent assessment of social and economic conditions in the Basin</b><sup>4</sup> has just commenced, with an interim assessment due in December 2019, and final assessment report on 30 April 2020. The Panel's assessment will be used to support longer term efforts to monitor and understand social and economic conditions in the Basin, and the impacts of water reforms on Basin communities.</li> </ul>
<b><i>The suitability and effectiveness of the</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a broad area which is largely addressed by existing reviews or measures. We refer the Committee to Appendix 1</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup>Productivity Commission Murray-Darling Basin Plan five-year assessment –Chapter 14

<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/basin-plan#report>

<sup>4</sup> More information: <https://www.basin-socio-economic.com.au/>



<p><b>existing legislative and administrative framework for the management of the Basin water resources, including any adverse effects that framework has had on the management of the Basin water resources (whether or not those effects are the result of misconduct</b></p>	<p>of this submission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In particular, this is largely addressed in the <i>Productivity Commission Murray-Darling Basin Plan five-year assessment</i> – see Sections 3, 5, 6, 11 and 13.</li> <li>• There is extensive work underway on a number of these areas – we refer the Committee to the commitment at the December Ministerial Council meeting to progress the <i>Constraints Measures Coordinating Work Plan</i>, and the work underway by the MDBA on deliverability.</li> <li>• The NSW Government introduced the Floodplain Harvesting Policy in 2013 to stop unconstrained floodplain harvesting by bringing it into a licensing framework. This year, the NSW Department of Industry and the MDBA, commissioned an <b>independent peer review of implementation of the Floodplain Harvesting Policy</b> in northern NSW.</li> <li>• ACCC review of water market operations – announced in May 2019.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The allocation of funds by the Commonwealth and the Basin States to implement the Basin Plan, and the impact of funded projects (including water buybacks and efficiency measures) in facilitating environmental watering in the Murray-Darling Basin;</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is likely to be inflammatory, and a duplication of existing work.</li> <li>• We remind the Committee that efficiency projects are subject to external audits, and administered through a delivery partner.</li> <li>• We refer the Committee to Appendix 1 of this submission, as well as note the ongoing <b>ANAO Audit of Procurement of strategic water entitlements</b>, and the ANAO audit of Administration of the Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program in NSW in 2012.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The likely impact of climate change to the Basin water resources, and any appropriate measures to take to adapt those resources in light of that impact;</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duplication of existing work – we refer the Committee to Appendix 1 of this submission – particularly the <b>Vertessy Report</b> and the <i>Productivity Commission Murray-Darling Basin Plan five-year assessment</i>.</li> <li>• The MDBA has recently commenced a <b>Climate Change Research Program</b> in partnership with the independent Advisory Committee on Social, Economic and Environmental Sciences (ACSEES). We refer the Committee to the MDBA “<i>Climate change and the Murray–Darling Basin Plan – discussion paper</i>”<sup>5</sup>.</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> MDBA, “Climate change and the Murray–Darling Basin Plan discussion paper”. Available here: <https://www.mdba.gov.au/publications/mdba-reports/climate-change-murray-darling-basin-plan-discussion-paper>



## **What constructive action is needed to improve outcomes in the Basin and ensure implementation of the Basin Plan?**

NSWIC is concerned that progress towards implementing aspects of the Basin Plan and other water management programs, may only be stalled through a Commission of Inquiry, taking us further from seeing improved outcomes in the Basin.

### *Implementation of the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) Projects must be a priority*

SDLAM projects are now the best opportunity to deliver improved environmental benefits whilst minimising the social and economic impact of the Basin Plan. It is critical that a set of community agreed and effective supply projects are implemented and achieve an equivalent environmental benefit of 605GL, otherwise there is risk that further water recovery would occur, further devastating our farming communities.

NSWIC is calling on Government to develop a flexible pathway to allow for new or improved projects, so we can get local communities involved, get these projects right, and get them in place.

If a Commission of Inquiry were to proceed, it would divert resources and effort away from implementation of these important but challenging projects, and risk exposing irrigation communities once again to water recovery.

**Recommendation D)** Ensure progression of SDLAM projects with constructive and meaningful stakeholder engagement as a priority.

### *Focus on Complementary Measures*

It is widely acknowledged that the Basin Plan, whilst a world-leading initiative with many strengths, is not a comprehensive nor drought-proofing mechanism to solve all the issues in the Basin – this was never the intention.

Other measures specifically designed to achieve ecological outcomes are required, beyond just obtaining the water volumes under the Basin Plan. This includes programs designed to improve the resilience of threatened species and improve habitats of native species.

NSWIC has strong positions on the importance of complementary and non-flow measures to achieve ecological objectives, and this was endorsed by the *Vertessy Report* into the Menindee Fish Deaths, and the *Productivity Commission* review. Complementary and non-flow measures can achieve far greater environmental outcomes than further recovering volumes of water. These measures include: improvements to fish passage, eradicating European Carp, and/or ameliorating cold water pollution.

With communities (and the environment) suffering from a lack of water and severe water insecurity, it is time to look beyond simply adding more water, and look to additional complementary and non-flow measures to get actual, and improved, outcomes in the Basin.



**Recommendation E)** NSWIC recommends that Government adopts a broader focus on policy in the Murray-Darling Basin which looks to complementary and non-flow measures to achieve improved outcomes.

### **What should the Committee (and others) be mindful of?**

#### *Complexity of the Basin Plan and Basin water management must be understood*

The Basin Plan is incredibly complex, and this continues to manifest through misunderstanding by the public, media and some politicians. It is critical that the Basin Plan is not misunderstood by our politicians.

**Recommendation F)** The Committee ensures that appropriately qualified witnesses are called from each state jurisdiction to discuss and explain to the Committee in detail the implementation and operation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan and its complex moving parts.

#### *Irrigation farmers are proud of our contributions to healthy rivers and communities in the Murray-Darling Basin, and this must be acknowledged and respected*

NSWIC is disappointed with the negativity towards irrigation in the Senator's second-reading speech. NSWIC encourages the Senator and others to recognise that irrigation farmers have a critical role in maintaining healthy rivers and communities in the Basin, and politicians must work with (not against) these people. Although regularly derided in speeches, larger irrigation farming businesses are larger employers of Australians in regional NSW, and they are also larger supporters of businesses in rural NSW, helping to maintain the existence of towns, and their economic and social foundations.

Irrigation farmers and our river communities whom they support have made significant sacrifice and contributions for the Basin Plan, which they have done in good faith to meet the objectives of the Basin Plan. It is therefore disappointing to see the negative attitude from the Senator towards the very people who are critical to the successful implementation of the Basin Plan to achieve both environmental and socio-economic outcomes.

**Recommendation G)** NSWIC seeks for politicians to acknowledge the valuable contributions by irrigation farmers for healthy rivers and communities in the Basin. If such an Inquiry does progress, we recommend that the Terms of Reference specifically includes understanding the many positive aspects of the Plan, including acknowledging and highlighting the positive contributions of irrigation farmers and the agricultural industry towards the health of the Basin and the dependent communities.

#### *Sensitivity must be shown to one of the worst droughts on record*

It is critical to acknowledge the context in which this Bill arises, as aforementioned. The Murray-Darling Basin is currently facing the worst drought on record, and rural communities are at breaking point. Politicians must show sensitivity to this context, including sensitivity to the mental health of those at the front-line of the outcomes from water politics. Water



politics, and significant reviews of this nature, causes stress and angst amongst communities more so during the current devastating drought. We seek reasoned, constructive, and genuine attempts to improve the outcomes for these people and their local environments.

We seek that the Committee be mindful that there has been less than 1% of average inflows into the Basin in recent times, according to WaterNSW. That is not the result of illegal activity or poor management, but a devastating drought. What it does show, however, is the need for action to be taken to most efficiently and effectively manage the water available in the Basin.

**Recommendation H)** NSWIC recommends that Committee fully recognises the impacts from the current drought.

### Constitutional Validity of the Bill

NSWIC expresses concern regarding the constitutional validity of the Bill, in regard to seeking appropriation from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Committee would be aware that appropriation bills cannot commence in the Senate (as outlined in the Constitution Section 53).<sup>6</sup>

## Conclusion

NSWIC is urgently seeking constructive, reasonable, rational, logical and genuine actions to improve the outcomes for all in the Murray-Darling Basin, particularly at such a critical time of water insecurity.

NSWIC believes that, given the 37 reviews into the Murray-Darling Basin covering a broad scope of issues, the Commission of Inquiry would only be inflammatory and distracting from taking constructive steps forward based on the findings and recommendations already available.

NSWIC and our Members are very much aware that neither the Basin Plan, nor implementation of the Basin Plan, are perfect, but we are also very aware that a plethora of constructive options to move forward have been provided, with action yet to be taken.

The last thing that the Basin needs is yet another inquiry inflaming more angst about water management, that risks stalling achieving the desired outcomes of this world-leading reform. This would place significant instability and uncertainty on those in the Basin who have already faced numerous tides of water reforms, adding stress and angst to the already (unfortunate and unnecessary) poor public perception of water management in the Basin.

In a time of critical water insecurity, Government must take action by adopting and implementing recommendations from previous reviews and inquiries, rather than just conducting yet another inquiry.

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<sup>6</sup> Parliament of Australia, "InfoSheet 10 – The budget and financial legislation". More information: [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/House\\_of\\_Representatives/Powers\\_practice\\_and\\_procedure/00\\_-\\_Infosheets/Infosheet\\_10\\_-\\_Budget\\_and\\_financial\\_legislation](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/Powers_practice_and_procedure/00_-_Infosheets/Infosheet_10_-_Budget_and_financial_legislation)



NSWIC would welcome the opportunity to appear as a witness, should the Committee invite our participation.

Kind regards,

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### APPENDIX 1: List of Murray Darling Basin Inquiries since 2012

#### External Analysis (non-exclusive)

Date	Organisation	Inquiry
2019	Productivity Commission	<a href="#">Murray-Darling Basin Plan: Five-year assessment</a>
2018	EY (for Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council)	<a href="#">Analysis of efficiency measures in the Murray-Darling Basin</a>
2018	Independent water experts (for QLD Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy)	<a href="#">Independent audit of Queensland non-urban water measurement and compliance</a>
2018	Independent Royal Commissioner (for South Australian Government)	<a href="#">Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission</a>
2018	Productivity Commission	<a href="#">Murray-Darling Basin Plan: five-year assessment</a>
2018	Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy	<a href="#">inquiry into the management and use of Commonwealth environmental water</a>
2017	Auditor General	<a href="#">Effectiveness of Monitoring and Payment Arrangements under National Partnership Agreements</a>
2017	Auditor General	<a href="#">New South Wales' Protection and use of Environmental Water in the Murray-Darling Basin</a>
2017	Productivity Commission	<a href="#">National Water Reform</a>
2017	Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport	<a href="#">Integrity of the water market in the Murray-Darling Basin</a>
2017	Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications	<a href="#">Adequacy of the regulatory framework governing water use by the extractive industry</a>
2017	Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources	<a href="#">Inquiry into water use efficiency programs in agriculture</a>
2015	ACCC	<a href="#">Review of Water charge rules</a>



2015	Senate Select Committee on the Murray-Darling Basin Plan	<a href="#">Murray-Darling Basin Plan</a>
2014	National Water Commission	<a href="#">Australia's Water Blueprint National Reform Assessment</a>

**Internal analysis  
(non-exclusive)**

Date	Organisation	Inquiry
2019	Independent Panel (Professor Robert Vertessy) (for MDBA)	<a href="#">Independent Assessment of the 2018-19 fish deaths in the Lower Darling</a>
2019	Independent Panel (Robbie Sefton) (for MDBA)	<a href="#">Independent assessment of social and economic conditions in the Basin</a>
2018	Murray-Darling Basin Authority	<a href="#">Basin Compliance Compact</a>
2017	Murray-Darling Basin Authority	<a href="#">The Murray–Darling Basin Water Compliance Review</a>
2017	Murray-Darling Basin Authority	<a href="#">Murray-Darling Basin Plan SDL Limits of Change Review</a>
2017	Murray-Darling Basin Authority	<a href="#">Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism: Draft Determination Report 2</a>
2017	Murray-Darling Basin Authority	<a href="#">2017 Basin Plan Evaluation</a>
2017	Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council	<a href="#">Implementing the Basin Plan</a>
2016	Murray-Darling Basin Authority	<a href="#">Northern Basin Review</a>
2018	University of New England (for MDBA)	<a href="#">an independent review of the southern basin community modelling approach</a>
2018	Drew Bewsher and Greg Claydon (for MDBA)	<a href="#">State water recovery - independent review reports</a>
2018	University for Melbourne (for MDBA)	<a href="#">Return flows: Independent review</a>
2017	Aither (for NSW and Vic Governments)	<a href="#">Murray-Darling Basin SDL adjustment mechanism</a>
2017	Aither (for NSW DPI)	<a href="#">Review of socio-economic neutrality in the context of Murray-Darling Basin Plan implementation</a>
2017	Bewsher (for MDBA)	<a href="#">Independent Review of Hydrologic Modelling for SDL Adjustments</a>
2017	Ken Matthews (for NSW Department of Industry)	<a href="#">Independent investigation into NSW Water Management and Compliance</a>





2017	Vic Department of Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee	<a href="#">Inquiry into the management, governance and use of environmental water</a>
2016	KPMG (for MDBA)	<a href="#">Northern Basin Community Economic Modelling</a>
2016	University of New England (for MDBA)	<a href="#">Independent review of the social and economic modelling for Northern Basin Review</a>
2015	Deloitte (for MDBA)	<a href="#">Socio-economic impacts of Groundwater Amendments to the Basin Plan</a>
2015	Warren Martin & Graeme Turner (for MDBA)	<a href="#">SDL Adjustment Stocktake Report</a>
2014	Cardno (for MDBA)	<a href="#">Independent review of the efficiency of River Murray Operations</a>