

SUBMISSION – Conservation Amendment (Climate Trigger) Bill 2020

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
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Canberra ACT 2600

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

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community. I pay my respects to their cultures and their elders past, present and emerging.

Dear Committee Secretary

I welcome this opportunity to lodge a submission to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Climate Trigger) Bill 2020*.

All over Australia, depleted water catchments and reserves and water security presents a worrying and increasing concern for our environment, native fauna, flora and for humans alike.

Australia is the driest continent in the world and water is our most precious resource – not coal or animal agriculture. If we do not take urgent action, our entire environment will collapse and die and so will our entire food system.

The public have lost all confidence and trust in government decision makers and the responsible authorities, and their will and ability to manage water ethically, responsibly or sustainably in lieu of increasing science and evidence about climate change and the climate emergency which is impacting us all now, and will certainly impact future generations.

At present a landowner who has surface water through a property can extract any amount ongoing and is not subject to any regulation regarding the volume or frequency of extraction. These landowners can also purchase an additional licence for further extraction, or even a further bore license. Again monitoring by the latter is only through self-regulation. Further 'water market' licences can also be secured. Water including both surface water groundwater is not a never ending resource and climate change is real.

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Animal agriculture and particularly intensive animal agriculture uses vast amounts of water and are also responsible for many pollution events and yet these ventures are rarely, if ever considered in water security policy direction. Such 'animal' producers are accountable only through self-regulation and the vast quantities of water extraction and pollution is having a significant impact on other neighbouring properties, local environments and native fauna and flora.

All water licenses, regardless of the nature of the extraction or the origins and source of the extraction, must have enforceable conditions attached which are monitored annually and where strong penalties are applied in all instances of breaches.

No water licences should ever be approved in drought declared regions or where a region has been declared groundwater vulnerable. No water licence should every be approved where it has a significant impact on a water catchment including our critical river systems. Our rainfall is diminishing and our weather patterns and temperatures are continuing to increase and there is simply not enough to go around.

All Local Government Council *Local Environment Plans* (LEP's) or equivalent local environment plans should be amended (Australia wide) to include specific references to water security (surface and groundwater) and all councils should be required to compile and implement new and relevant water policies.

If we don't action our rivers and creeks will continue to die and some rivers, waterways and species (fauna and flora) will never recover.

Government (at federal, state and local level) is well aware of the serious and urgent issues, the corruption, water theft and the lack of action. Many of our political leaders should be charged for failing to undertake and fulfill their responsibilities under legislation. Our waterways need urgent action, not words of paper collecting dust.

As an urgent priority governments (federal and state) must buy back more water for priority environmental use, however should NOT be mass flooding areas and killing native fauna in the process. When they are cut off from food sources and starve to death, or simply drown.

Thank you for taking my submission points into consideration.

Lisa J Ryan
21 May 2020