

From: [s.22]
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Cc: [MDBA Media](#); [Carl Binning](#); [Phillip Glyde](#); [s.22] ; [Ag Media](#); [s.22] ; [Swirepik, Jody](#); [Morris, Paul](#)
Subject: FOR INFO: MDBA response to upcoming Background Briefing [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Saturday, 28 April 2018 3:13:56 PM
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[MDBA Op Ed return flows 280418.docx](#)

Hi all

Tomorrow the ABC's Radio National will broadcast Background Briefing, a 40 minute documentary style show, that is a critique of the MDBP that relies on the return flows work of John Williams and Quentin Grafton for its evidence base.

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/backgroundbriefing/murray-darling-basin-crisis/9687538>. They have the audio on line (as I am sure you are aware) and have posted a short animation on the ABC News facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/abcnews.au/>

Both the Background Briefing and the Facebook video accept the assertions by Williams and Grafton as fact. Phillip Glyde did provide an interview and much that is relevant to the 'return flows' issue has not been used in the story. They are promoting part 2 for next week which will focus on the SDLAM and features Mary-Ann Slattery as an expert. We'll keep you in the loop around materials we may prepare for that.

We have the attached opinion piece drafted, penned under our Executive Director Carl Binning's name. We plan to add this to the website and provide to the ABC's Drum and the Guardian – as well as any other outlets (as needed depending on the interest generated).

We have already posted the following on the ABC's facebook page:

Contrary to the posted video the Basin Plan is working. The Basin Plan is on track to deliver increased water for the environment and to restore the health of ecosystems.

Investment in water efficiency is a good investment. There is no evidence that reducing return flows is a bad investment or that it causes damage to the environment.

This simplistic portrayal of return flows presumes all 'wasted' water delivers environmental benefits – that's a false assumption.

Real water has been recovered for the environment by the Commonwealth's investment in irrigation efficiency. There's 700 GL of water that can now be used when, where and how it's needed to deliver valuable environmental outcomes for native fish, birds and vegetation.

Actually, reducing return flows is generally a good thing for the environment. It reduces salinity levels and stops rising water tables, it starves invasive pests and weeds that compete with our native flora and fauna of water, and it reduces evaporative losses experienced by the environment and industries.

The Basin Plan is a solid investment in returning the Murray-Darling Basin to a sustainable, healthy and workable footing. It is a shame to see the significant environmental benefits it will yield put in jeopardy because of a willful ignorance concerning the impact of return flows.

Happy to discuss or answer any questions

Cheers

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Director, media and chair support



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