
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Advisory Report

**Water Amendment (Long-term Average Sustainable Diversion
Limit Adjustment) Bill 2012**

**House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Regional Australia**

October 2012
Canberra

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Foreword

The Standing Committee on Regional Australia has undertaken two inquiries into matters related to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. The first inquiry, resulted in the report *Of Drought and Flooding Rains*, and called for greater community focus in Basin planning processes. The second report, *Report on certain matters relating to the proposed-Murray Darling Basin Plan*, identified a number of issues that needed to be addressed prior to parliamentary scrutiny of the Basin Plan.

The current inquiry has examined a proposed amendment to the *Water Act 2007*, which is in direct response to one of the recommendations made in the Committee's second inquiry. The recommendation was endorsed by all Members who participated in that inquiry.

I commend the Government for its responsiveness to the Committee's findings in relation to Murray-Darling Basin arrangements and processes and particularly the most recent inquiry into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. This is the first time the Parliament has had a committee that is specifically charged with matters concerning Regional Australia and this bill is proof of the effectiveness and critical importance of this committee's existence.

While the Committee believes that it is fundamentally important that the community has input to the Basin Plan, the final responsibility for approving it rests with the Federal Parliament. We as parliamentarians must be confident that any Basin Plan provides the balance between social, economic and environmental outcomes for the Basin as a whole.

The *Water Act 2007* provides the process for developing and amending the Basin Plan. This process appropriately involves a lengthy community and parliamentary consultation process. However, it does not allow for the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) to react quickly in response to local conditions.

Both of the Committee's previous inquiries found a need for the MDBA to be more responsive to local conditions and improvements in water use. I believe that the proposal put forward in this bill strikes an appropriate balance between the need for parliamentary oversight and the need for the MDBA to be responsive to the community.

Tony Windsor MP
Chair



Membership of the Committee

Chair Tony Windsor MP

Deputy Chair Steve Gibbons MP

Members Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP
Barry Haase MP
Kirsten Livermore MP
Michael McCormack MP
Dan Tehan MP
Rob Mitchell MP

Supplementary member for the purposes of the inquiry

Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP

Committee Secretariat

Secretary Glenn Worthington

Inquiry Secretary Siobhán Leyne

Administrative Officers Daniel Miletic

Emily Costelloe



Terms of reference

The terms of reference are the text of the Water Amendment (Long-term Average Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment) Bill.



List of recommendations

1 Water Amendment (Long-term Average Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment) Bill 2012

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the House of Representatives pass the Water Amendment (Long-term Average Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment) Bill 2012.