



Water For Rivers

**Submission Number: 8**  
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14<sup>th</sup> June 2012

The Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Leyne

*'Water for Rivers has demonstrated that there is sufficient water for all sectors if it is managed properly.'*

On behalf of the Water for Rivers Board I would like to make the following submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia, specifically addressing: *The potential role that new environmental works and measures projects could play in partially offsetting SDL reductions under the Basin Plan, focussing particularly on prospective project proposals identified by state governments and community interests.*

Please find attached copy of our submission to the MDBA '**Proposed Basin Plan – Creating the world's most efficient natural river systems**' which is of relevance to this Inquiry.

Water recovery and efficiency should be planned from a 'total river system approach', from headworks to on-farm/environmental asset i.e. similar in concept to the root, trunk and branch approach to tax reform. The alternative is a demonstrated discontinuous approach which leads to sub-optimal ineffective and costly water recovery, to the detriment of the irrigation sector, our regions and will result in less water for the environment.

Our submission asks the question - Why are governments not actively investing in and rolling out river system water management technology which is currently being implemented for the entire Murrumbidgee River? This will deliver significant SDL reductions (5% efficiency gains in long term average flows) and enable better water delivery for the environment using less water.

To exemplify this, the need for improved river system management is analogous to the proven benefits of delivery channel automation using real time technology, which have been demonstrated with the NVIRP project in northern Victoria and Coleambally Irrigation in NSW.

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The Murrumbidgee Computer Aided River Management (CARM) system, which is an upgrade of river infrastructure and installation of new interactive river flow management technology, throughout the Murrumbidgee river system, would deliver and underpin 'water system efficiency' benefits for the Basin, enabling better environmental water delivery to the 'right place, at the right quantity and at the right time'.

CARM allows river operators to deliver targeted environmental releases and water for consumptive use whilst minimising river system losses. The new water product (SDL credit) is adaptive environmental water. Adaptive environmental water is not water entitlements as such, it is an annual water product that improves the reliability of allocation and reduces the volume of allocation required for environmental purposes. Adaptive environmental water also reduces the total amount of permanent water entitlements required by Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) to meet its environmental objectives.

This \$80 million Murrumbidgee project is expected to achieve 262 – 312 GL of water efficiency benefits of which up to 150 – 200 GL could be converted to adaptive environmental water entitlements for environment use.

Better managed flow control in both systems achieves water efficiency benefits through less leakage and seepage, reduced transmission losses and reduced operational surplus or unaccounted for water.

The equitable delivery of water to all consumptive users and the environment requires cost effective and efficient 'real time' water delivery control management; this is the only way to acceptably achieve future SDL's as determined by the MDBA and the Australian Government.

In other words, smarter use of river water and continuous 'real time' river valley flow measurement and water accounting with improved control will deliver better solutions and outcomes for the Basin community, as well as providing far superior environmental watering outcomes in absolute quantity/response terms, using less water.

It will also significantly improve river operator ability to improve connectivity and capacity constraint management, more accurately account for and manage rules based water and would underpin the future MDBA Environmental Management Plan, watering requirements, and enable on line trading with water options.

Section A in the attached submission outlines to the Standing Committee the need for a river valley approach to maximise river system water use efficiency or SDL credits, and Section B outlines the benefits that Computer Aided River Management (CARM) will provide to Basin communities.

Water for Rivers has also recently undertaken a preliminary feasibility study of other rivers in NSW which would provide significant SDL off sets (in the order of 70 – 80,000 ML of adaptive environmental water per year) without any reduction in the consumptive pool.

We would be pleased to provide a confidential outline of this study to a Standing Committee hearing for their consideration.

We have also recently made a submission to the CEWH as we believe that CARM combined with active water term product(s) and trading together with the recognition and more efficient use of rules based water (using CARM) and adaptive environmental water as part of CEWH's water assets, will permit CEWH and the MDBA, to more effectively fulfil its target water objectives.

Yours sincerely,

**Richard Bull**  
**Chairman**