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Murrumbidgee Private Irrigators Incorporated (MPII)

in conjunction with the

**Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council
(YACTAC)**

Submission to the

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

**Inquiry into the Water for the Environment Special Account Bill
2012.**

Due by 15 November 2012

Submit via ra.reps@aph.gov.au

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Introduction:

MPII represents irrigators on the full length of the Murrumbidgee River, and Yanco Creek System. Our members live from Batlow to Balranald and from Jerilderie to Moulamein. We also have a number of “operators” amongst our members although volumes of water are vastly smaller than the irrigation corporations. We are approximately one third of the diversions on the Murrumbidgee system with approximately 400,000 megalitres being made up of High Security and General Security entitlements dispersed amongst approximately 400 members.

Comments:

MPII wishes to inform the House of Reps standing committee that until our organisation and other representative bodies see the finalized Basin Plan in its written form it is almost impossible to provide advice on the proposed Bill’s outcome for our members and their communities.

Whilst generally speaking MPII supports the concept of the adjustment mechanism, until such time that stakeholders view the detail of the mechanism in the current Draft Basin Plan in written word, it is not appropriate to comment.

Due to the brief timeframe given for this submission MPII have not had adequate time to consult with their members and as a result the submission does not include what should have been a more detailed document.

Top priority Concerns:

- The Bill focuses on environmental site outcomes without substantiation of these recommended requirements.
- In reference to the Water Act – *triple bottom line approach* – MPII is of the view that this will not occur due to the vast volume of water required at the bottom end of the system in tandem with the deliverability even if delivery constraints were to be removed.
- A major concern is the impact the delivery of the projected flows being recommended at the Murray Mouth would have on towns along the system that rely on tourism and recreational activities. Throughout this entire process thus far, the MDBA has continuously noted tourism as counterbalancing third party impacts of a reduction of water from productive use in basin communities.

86AD(2)(b) Purchase of Water Access Rights

MPII is dismayed at the prospect of purchasing water access rights for the purpose of furthering the object of this Bill.

This subsection allows the Government with the option for further buybacks of water access rights which MPII does not support. Our regions have already returned massive portions of entitlements to the environment and this action has caused a downward spiral effect on the communities at large.

MPII strongly advocates that all in all this Bill has the potential to further decimate communities in our region, therefore we submit that clause 86AD(2)(b), 86AD(4) be removed from the Bill and that the focus remain on clause 86AD(@)(a)(i) within reason.

In Conclusion

MPII submits that the Committee report to the House of Representatives that this bill cannot be considered and should be deferred until the current Draft of the Basin Plan is viewed by all political parties, stakeholders and the public.

ENDS.