

The Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications And the Arts  
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29 January 2009

To the Senate Inquiry into the Water Amendment (Saving the Goulburn and Murray Rivers) Bill 2008.

I fully support the Private Member's Bill from Senator Simon Birmingham to amend the *Water Act 2007* with the Water Amendment (Saving the Goulburn and Murray Rivers) Bill 2008. This amendment closes recently identified loopholes in the *Water Act 2007*, which allow politically motivated actions contravene principles of environmental policies and management. An approval of the *Water Amendment Bill 2008* will cement the Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) Policy from 2001, which was and still is supported by all governments, communities, and industries. The creation of catchment management authorities and ICM have underwritten the scientifically founded necessity to base environmental, including water management decisions on the principle of maintaining sustainable catchment wide ecosystem processes. A rejection of the *Water Amendment Bill 2008* will unreservedly undermine ICM, since a precedence of excising a fundamental catchment ecosystem resource (water) from the Murray Darling Basin will be approved by not closing the loopholes in the *Water Act 2007*, which allowed this to happen.

Water is the essential ecosystem sustaining resource of the Murray Darling Basin. Numerous investigations, research, and MDBC data have shown beyond doubt that the Murray Darling Basin is short of water. In view of climate forecasts and human water use, this scenario is not to change for the better. Consequently, Senator Birmingham's Bill is honest in as much it highlights the need to admit and correct a deficiency in the current *Water Act 2007* and is desperately needed to safeguard the Murray Darling Basin ecosystem.

Yours sincerely,

Christiane Jaeger