



Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications  
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Canberra ACT 2600  
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Friday 26 July 2019

Dear Committee Secretary

### **Submission to Murray-Darling Basin Commission of Inquiry Bill 2019**

This submission is lodged on behalf of the Lifeblood Alliance of environmental, Indigenous and community groups committed to keeping the rivers, wetlands and aquifers of the Murray-Darling Basin healthy for the benefit of current and future generations.

The Lifeblood Alliance supports the Murray-Darling Basin Commission of Inquiry Bill 2019 as introduced into Parliament on the 13 February 2019.

The implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan has been severely compromised. Its shortcomings have been exposed, once again, by the ABC Four Corners program “Cash Splash”, aired on Monday 8 July 2019.

The community strongly objects to a process of corporate rorting, money for mates and other evidence of maladministration. We are calling for immediate action to get the Plan ‘Back on Track’.

The Lifeblood Alliance is committed to supporting a Basin Plan that is successful in addressing the over extraction of water in the Basin, as required under the *Water Act 2007*, to protect, restore and provide for the ecological values and ecosystem services of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Implementing our seven point ‘Back on Track’ plan will ensure that the Basin Plan achieves its key objectives and will result in proper investment of public money.

We call for the immediate establishment of an independent Federal Basin Plan Regulator and a full independent audit of water recovery and expenditure under the Basin Plan. These actions are required to demonstrate the federal and state governments' commitment to the delivery of a Basin Plan that restores our rivers, wetlands and aquifers to health.

Our seven point 'Back on Track' plan provides a way forward to protect river flows, build resilient communities, establish good governance, secure first nations cultural water, align water extraction with science, track progress and improve transparency.

The seven point 'Back on Track' plan, is attached to this submission.

We support the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry to examine the allegations of corruption, maladministration and mismanagement.

For more information please contact Bev Smiles Inland Rivers Network:

Yours sincerely

Bev Smiles  
On behalf of:

Conservation Council of South Australia  
Environment Victoria  
Nature Conservation Council of NSW  
Queensland Conservation Council  
Environmental Farmers Network  
Friends of the Earth River Country  
Goulburn Valley Environment Group  
Healthy Rivers Dubbo  
Inland Rivers Network  
Murray Lower Darling Indigenous Nations  
National Parks Association NSW  
River, Lakes and Coorong Action Group  
Central West Environment Council