

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committees

Please accept this submission in support of retaining all the current provisions of the *Water Act 2007* that was written, and passed, with the purpose of ensuring that extraction of water resources is returned to **environmentally sustainable levels** in order to protect, restore and provide for the ecological values and ecosystem services of the Murray-Darling Basin.

The Act provides broadly for the delivery of a Basin Plan that is environmentally sound and scientifically rigorous – something that is desperately, and urgently, needed.

For too long the balance of water use in the Basin has been heavily weighted towards extraction for irrigation and substantive wastage at times through evaporation, leading to highly stressed river systems. The *Water Act 2007* was introduced in order to address this imbalance and return water to the environment and to those communities that rely of water from these systems for their existence.

The *Water Act 2007* gets the balance right and does not need to be amended.

- . The *Water Act 2007* importantly recognises the need to return extraction to long-term sustainable levels and this must remain the focus.
- . The *Water Act 2007* correctly prioritises the need to reduce water extraction and return water to the environment in order to support both the ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.
- . The *Water Act 2007* correctly acknowledges the need to base decisions about sustainable water extraction levels on the best available science. Any call to base decisions on a different ‘balance’ of social, environmental and environmental considerations will rely on the politics of the day and not scientific understanding.
- . Healthy rivers equal healthy communities.

Do not let this current time of plenty that we are experiencing, with restorative flows in the rivers, drive a short sighted view that there is an abundance of water available. Over the past twenty to thirty years I have personally witnessed the devastation of the inland river system from the upper Darling River through to the lower lakes and have been overwhelmingly disappointed with short term political decisions made in the past that seemed like a good idea at the time but proved to be devastating to the river systems and the communities that rely upon them for their mere existence.

The only alternative to environmentally sustainable extraction levels is unsustainable extraction levels.

We cannot go back to that position.

James Moore