

Committee Secretary

**Senate Legal and Constitutional Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600**

Senate Inquiry into the Provisions of the Water Act 2007

I am writing with regard to the Review of the Water Act 2007.

My contention is that the Draft Plan for the MDB was in itself a compromise between what the science, and common sense and observation of nature tells us, and what the MDBA thought the political mood of the community would bear.

To alter the Draft Plan would thus be a further compromise – a Compromise upon a Compromise. As such it would be worse than useless.

The rivers systems and wetlands of the Murray-Darling Basin are suffering after decades of over-allocation and over-extraction of water resources. You can see it in front of your own eyes (I assume you have made a personal inspection of at least part of the Murray Darling Basin – If not, please stop reading my submission right now, and get out there and look, listen (to the birds and the frogs., especially at night). then think about what you have seen.



Please do as I have done.

You will have seen that trees along the Rivers in the entire system have been dying. They are currently experiencing their first good season in 12 years. But that is a temporary situation. **Drought will return to the Basin – it always does.**

Salt-pans have formed where no salt-pans have been known before. We have already lost 90% of floodplain wetlands in the Basin, 80% of the waterbird populations that used to live there, 90% of native fish populations and 80% of our River Red Gum wetland forests.

The Murray-Darling Basin provides the once in a lifetime opportunity to restore the health to the precious river and wetland systems of the Basin. The Murray Darling Basin supports all of Australia – not just the abstract notion of the “Economy”. This issue is bigger than that.

The Water Act 2007 was written, and passed, with the purpose of ensuring that extraction of water resources be returned to environmentally sustainable levels (not the absurd over-allocations we have seen). It was designed to protect, restore and provide for the ecological values and ecosystem services of the Murray-Darling Basin. The Act provides for a Basin Plan that is environmentally sound and scientifically rigorous – something that is desperately, and urgently, needed.

I write as Chairman of the Australian Water Campaigners Inc, and as a long-term naturalist, to plead with the Committee to listen to a non-partisan voice.

Please do not allow the Parliamentary Inquiry to be swayed by the Bully-boy tactics witnessed in recent months when the Draft Plan was first announced.

Denis Wilson
Chairman
Australian Water Campaigners Inc