



The Goulburn Valley Environment Group Inc.

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Environment and Communications Legislation Committee of the Australian Senate

Inquiry into the National Water Commission (Abolition) Bill 2014

The Goulbourn Valley Environmnet Group (GVEG) supports the retention of the Natioal Water Commission (NWC) in it's current form. Our members, who include irrigators have relied on the NWC's independent reveiws and audits that have ensured we have critical water reforms in place that have not only protected the environment but also greatly added to certainty and flexibility of irrigators.

We are concerned this loss of independence would put at risk the ongoing efficiency gains made by water reforms, reduce the level of service to irrigators and the community and subject auditing and advice to ministerial interference.

The implementation phase of the Basin Plan is the culmination of an enormous investment both by Federal and State Governments, irrigators and Basin communities and the Taxpayer and now more than ever the advice of an independent NWC is required.

Australia has led the world in the development of water markets. The ongoing oversight of governance, future growth and auditing of these markets is essential to maintain the confidence of irrigators and our communities.

The intention to incorporate the role and responsibilities of the NWC into the Productivity Commission appears to ignore the current functions of the Commission which include *the improvement of the overall performance of the economy, to reduce regulation of industry, to encourage the development and growth of Australian industries, to facilitate adjustment to structural changes in the economy and to recognise the interests of industries, employees, consumers and the community.*

The Productivity Commission is not mandated to facilitate the independent review of resource management or environmental issues and does not have the resources or expertise to do so.

GVEG strongly believes that we need an independent body advising the States and Federal Government on water policy and the effectiveness of policy delivery in water management.

Yours sincerely,
John Pettigrew, GVEG President