

Senate Inquiry into the Provisions of the Water Act 2007.

The Water Act 2007 was introduced in good faith as an endeavour to right many of the wrongs of the past, when too much water was allocated to irrigators, by various governments, over many years.

It would appear that the legislators at the time stipulated a balance between extraction and the environment and that no amendments are needed now. The Water Act 2007 recognises the need to return extraction to long term, ecologically sustainable levels, and that is the requirement now.

The balance of water use in the Murray-Darling Basin has been heavily weighted towards too much extraction leading to highly stressed river systems. Science now says that the balance must be restored to save the rivers from an untimely death, and a similar fate for the communities that rely on them for a livelihood. All Australians need and require the Murray-Darling rivers system to be a healthy system.

The Water Act 2007 broadly provides for the delivery of a Basin Plan that is environmentally sound and scientifically rigorous, something that is desperately and urgently needed right now.

Too much emphasis on the social and economic considerations will rely on politics and be a short term solution only.

Ron Webster