

To whom it may concern.

Act responsibly – without fear or favour.

I understand that submissions are being received on the Murray-Darling system and addressing the concerns of communities and irrigator-farmers on water.

I believe we have excellent scientific bases for acting on the recommendations of the Water Act 2007.

I wish to say that our great river system flourish when they are not deprived of what they needed to function successfully. Despite periodic drought, the rivers and the land were healthy. Fish stocks were various and in plenty.

Consequently environmental, people and land use worked in harmony. The degree of salinity that currently is the plague of communities associated with the river, particularly downstream, was then not the blight that it is now – reflected in declining (in both number and species) of fish.

Have we not learned? We CANNOT continue with extracting river water to a level that causes such damage to the land. Short-sighted, selfish actions by these two or three generations will continue to mount in their destructive force.

If we keep on doing what we have done, we will continue to get more of what we have got: salinity, with its unprecedented environmental losses, and the destruction of farming land – and then inevitably will come the destruction of communities as families are forced off unproductive land.

I understand the pain that this change will incur, but to bury our heads in the sand and pretend that it's too hard a decision is not doing justice to the land that supports us. Something drastic must be done ... and NOW ... otherwise we are only being part of the problem, not part of a responsible, clear-headed, science-based solution. We must favour the future - generations *which number countless thousands*– not our own generation - though it also numbers thousands also speaking from fear of loss.

With thanks
Yours sincerely
Faye Shepherd
Victoria