

Peel Valley Water Users Association

PO Box 952, Tamworth NSW 2340

The Committee Secretary
Senate Legal & Constitutional Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

4th April 2011

Dear Sir

Re: Inquiry into the provisions of the Water Act 2007

The Peel Valley Water Users Association represents irrigators and business owners in the Peel Valley in the Tamworth district.

Although this Association does not currently have access to the resources that would be required to lodge a properly researched and legally sound submission on the Water Act 2007, we are however, interested observers of the Inquiry's process because we are directly impacted by the eventual outcome.

What is abundantly clear to us is the fact that there is still ongoing robust debate on whether the Water Act 2007 should be amended. This is a matter of very great concern, because the release of the Draft Basin Plan is imminent, and the foundation on which the Plan has been constructed should not still be the subject of debate at this late stage.

Our very grave fear is that once the Draft Basin Plan is released, a legal challenge is then mounted to the Water Act 2007, causing the Draft Basin Plan to be reviewed and amended. If that eventuates, it would only add more uncertainty, more delays and more frustration for all of the stakeholders involved. It is inconceivable that stakeholders should then have to go through the process of negotiations over the Draft Basin Plan again if the Water Act was amended after the Draft Basin Plan was released.

What we seek from the members of the Inquiry is that an irrefutable decision on whether the Water Act 2007 should be amended is handed down before the Draft Basin Plan is released. If that means that the release of the Draft Basin Plan is delayed, then that is preferable to the alternative.

We acknowledge that the closing date for submissions on this topic has now passed, but we are lodging this late submission because we are also aware that the Committee has requested an extension for this Inquiry from the Senate.

Yours sincerely

President

Cc Mr Tony Windsor, MP; Mr Bruce Logan, Tamworth Regional Council