



Government
of South Australia

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Senator Doug Cameron
Chair
Senate Environment and Communications Committee
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Cameron

Re: Inquiry into the *Water Amendment (Long Term Average Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment) Bill 2012* and the *Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012*

Thank you for your invitation to give evidence to the Committee on Thursday 8 November 2012 regarding the inquiry into the provisions of the *Water Amendment (Long Term Average Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment) Bill 2012* and *Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012*.

Unfortunately due to the short notice provided a representative of the South Australian Government is not able to attend the hearing.

I note that the passage of the *Water Amendment (Long Term Average Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment) Bill 2012* will lay the basis for a sustainable diversion adjustment mechanism to be included in the Basin Plan. This will enable sustainable diversion limits to be adjusted to take into account measures that result in less water recovery being necessary to achieve the same environmental outcomes. This recognises that works and measures can be put in place to provide for more efficient environmental watering. Importantly sustainable diversion limits can also be adjusted to enable additional water to be recovered where this does not have an adverse socio-economic impact.

In regard to the *Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012*, I wish to record my Government's support for this Bill. The passage of this Bill will represent an important step in restoring the health of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Science analysis based on modelling by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority shows that the return of 3200 GL is required to achieve a healthy river system. The benefits of the return of 3200 GL can be maximised when constraints to water flow are addressed, including measures to protect from flooding.



The passage of the *Water Amendment (Water for the Environment Special Account) Bill 2012* is important to ensure that the funding committed by the Commonwealth Government to recover the additional 450 GL and address constraints to environmental water delivery is protected by legislation. The Bill will ensure that the funding will be secured for the long term and spent on recovering water and addressing constraints consistent with the Commonwealth Government's commitment to support a healthy river system.

I understand that the Bill will also be referred to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia. I intend to provide a more comprehensive written submission to that Committee and will ensure it is copied to you for your deliberations.

Yours sincerely

PAUL CAICA
MINISTER FOR WATER AND THE RIVER MURRAY