

**Submission: Standing Committee on Regional Australia inquiry on the socio-economic impact of the proposed Murray-Darling Basin Authority's Guide to the Proposed Basin Plan.**

1. Any consideration of the Proposed Basin Plan, and indeed the Plan itself, must consider the probable reductions in rainfall and runoff, of the order of 30% in 50 years, detailed in CSIRO's analysis of the impact of climate change in the MDB.
2. Most experts agree that the minimum quantity of water that needs to be returned to the MDB to ensure even minimal environmental health and sustainability is at the upper end of the range in the Proposed Basin Plan, i.e. ~7 Gig, and that amounts at the lower end of the range will be inadequate. Probable reduction in runoff through climate change merely increases the need for a minimum environmental allocation of ~7 Gig. The Standing Committee should therefore focus on impacts, alleviation, and transition strategies delivering at least 7 Gig of environmental water.
3. Time is a key and rapidly diminishing resource in this issue. Further substantive delays in implementing a scheme that guarantees adequate environmental flows will see irreversible damage to the MBD system that will ultimately lead to the demise of irrigated agriculture and river communities.

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