

## **Additional comments by the Australian Greens**

1.1 The Australian Greens welcome this comprehensive report from the committee. We have considerable concerns about the implementation of the Basin Plan and feel these concerns are broadly represented.

1.2 While we support the recommendations of the inquiry some of our concerns are not reflected.

### ***Floodplain harvesting***

1.3 The Murray-Darling Basin Plan is intended to limit the extraction of water to a Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL).

1.4 There is insufficient evidence to give any confidence to water markets that the new floodplain harvesting policies and issuing of licences have not increased the capture of water off the floodplain since the 1993-94 level of development or even the 2008-09 level of development.

1.5 Allegations of increased floodplain harvesting are difficult to uphold because:

- they have not been measured historically;
- the estimates in BDL and SDL models are known to be significantly underestimated;
- the records for on farm storages and levee banks are sparse and often rely on self-reporting; and
- the agencies responsible for approving works on the floodplain are not water agencies and don't have hydrological expertise.

### **Recommendation 1**

**1.6 The Australian Greens recommend that a register of floodplain works, with works approvals and storage sizes be published.**

### ***Transparency and accountability***

1.7 The SDL hydrological model will become the compliance tool to ensure that annual extractions are within the legal limit.

1.8 There is a lack of transparency around how the model is made and assessed, which diminishes the market confidence in the compliance with the SDL.

### **Recommendation 2**

**1.9 The Australian Greens recommend that the SDL compliance process is revised for transparency and accountability and to include an independent accreditation of the SDL model which is published, and an independent assessment of the annual SDL compliance process.**

*Allegations of corruption and water theft*

1.10 The cross-jurisdictional nature of the Murray Darling Basin Plan, and the involvement of many different government agencies and politicians means that the oversight and investigative abilities of any one monitoring or law enforcement agency may be inadequate to deal with allegations of corruption and water theft. A National Integrity Commission could address some of these concerns.

**Recommendation 3**

**1.11 The Australian Greens recommend that the federal government create an independent, broad-based public sector anti-corruption commission for the Commonwealth.**

**Senator Sarah Hanson-Young**

**Senator for South Australia**