

To members of the Senate ECA Committee re:- Water Amendment (Saving the Goulburn and Murray Rivers.

Dear Senators.

Since the Victorian State Government announced its intention to remove water from the Murray/Goulburn catchment, I have expressed my deep concern over the removal of any water from that catchment because of the implications this policy has on the environmental, social and economic impact on the rivers and lands through which these rivers flow. There is no doubt that the impact will be felt as far away as the Coorong in South Australia.

I am attaching 4 contributions from the several contributions I made to the debate, but my arguments were always rejected by the proponents as rather esoteric. I have spent a lifetime as a researcher and teacher of plant sciences and ecology at The University of Melbourne and I have had considerable experience as a consultant and advisor to several Ministers in former Victorian Governments.

My main points are:-

1. The Goulburn River is recognised as a major water catchment in Victoria, it is degraded and ecologically stressed; conditions which can only be made worse if 75 gl of water is removed annually.

2. With Lake Eildon at only around 20% capacity, there is considerable doubt that this water will be available for extraction without causing the most extreme damage to the river below the town of Yea.

3. The combined impact of the pipeline to Melbourne and the greater utilisation and management of the irrigation infrastructure of the "Food Bowl", will be a reduced flow from the Goulburn into the Murray. The outcome of this is a flow-on effect on the Murray itself and the important wetlands of the iconic Coorong.

The whole deal is unacceptable and as a concerned Australian I implore you to intervene and stop the regional vandalism of the Murray/Goulburn catchment.

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Former:-Associate Professor and Chair of the School of Botany, The University of Melbourne

Member of the Victorian Land Conservation Council

Chairman of the Victorian National Parks Advisory Council

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