

4 Sep 2008

The Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

RE: INQUIRY INTO WATER MANAGEMENT IN THE COORONG AND LOWER LAKES

I feel helpless at the state of the Murray-Darling basin and the devastation down-river on the Lower Lakes and the Coorong. We have had plenty of warning over the last 30 years, including in my own case watching a rainfall that once supported 8 family members battle to support just 2 now. We must do everything in our power to save the Murray Darling Basin and the Lower Lakes and the Coorong if possible.

My submission is that the Committee for the Inquiry into Water Management in the Coorong and Lower Lakes considers the intention of the Victorian Government to remove even more water from the Murray Darling Basin system via pipelines, especially the massive North South Pipeline, from the Goulburn River, which is the major tributary of the Murray River. I also request that the Committee recommends a reconsideration of the original Referral for this pipeline under s78 of the EPBC act because the original controlling provisions 18 and 18A were not broad enough. We now know that there is significant new information which should be considered and that the controlling provisions should have been expanded to include 16 and 16B Ramsar Wetlands and 20 and 20B Migratory Species, thereby extending the environmental study to include the effect on the Goulburn River, Eildon Weir and the entire Murray-Darling Basin system and consequently the Lower Lakes and the Coorong in South Australia.

This massive pipe will cause enormous ecological damage, not only physically to the beautiful Yea River valley and the Toolangi State Forest but also cause a huge amount of carbon emission due to the massive pumps and electricity required. It has been reported that when the pump is turned on in Yea that the river will run backwards. This all so that Mr Brumby can, in his own words, return Melbourne to the state it was before water restrictions – in other words so that the city can water gardens, wash cars and flush toilets with impunity.

The storing of stolen water into massive dams by rich landholders in Queensland must be stopped, every effort should be made to save Lakes Albert and Alexandrina from the devastation caused by over-allocation by the South Australian Government and the Victorian Government must be held accountable for bulldozing through with a project that will see a *minimum* of 75GL per year removed from the Goulburn River without a properly controlled EES study and proper procedure being followed. We still have not been shown full costing and proof that any water “savings” can be achieved, particularly in light of the fact that there will be no “new water” unless we return to previous high-level rainfall, which scientific evidence states will not happen. The report from the Review Committee on this pipeline still has not been released by this cowardly, deceptive government.

There are plenty of other measures to gain water for Melbourne, many of which would stop perfectly good water running out to sea. Melbourne’s many water storages are at 34% full, while Lake Eildon from whence the pipe will take the water is 86% empty and its source, the Goulburn River, actually dried up above the dam in the last two

years. The water does not exist and this project which plans to remove water from the dry north and send it to the wet south will be no more successful than the empty pipe-dream that promised to supply Bendigo with water and still sees the city with only 7% in their water storage and the people still on Level 4 water restrictions.

Rural Australians rely on rainfall and know how to conserve water – we have to as we don't have pipes delivering it to our door. It is time for governments to tackle this environmental problem with future generations in mind rather than with quick fixes designed to secure their political future.

Despite Mr Brumby's attempt to disassociate the Goulburn River from the Murray Darling Basin, it remains a major tributary of the Murray, therefore any water removed from it impacts further downstream. I respectfully make submission that the Committee ensures that the Victorian Government complies fully with s78 and therefore reduces any further stress on the Murray Darling Basin and in consequence, the Lower Lakes and the Coorong.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Allan Robert Jones', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Allan Robert Jones

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