



PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO WATER MANAGEMENT IN THE COORONG AND LOWER LAKES - Submission by the Waterfind Environment Fund

Background

The Waterfind Environment Fund is a not-for profit fund which holds, on trust, water or money for water, to be used for environmental projects.

The projects are usually community-based and can be related to native fish or fauna. Recent projects include refreshing wetlands and a publicity campaign to highlight the plight of native fish in drought. We are also working with the native tortoise recovery groups in the Lower Lakes and Coorong area.

Water management

Waterfind Environment Fund members have been following with interest the debate on the Lower Lakes and Coorong, partly because of its significance as a international RAMSAR site, and partly because the area is acting as the test case for management of the entire Murray Darling Basin system.

What is clear is that the current water trading and sharing arrangements are convoluted and confusing and differ from state to state, making the transfer of water up and down the system extremely difficult and time consuming.

This is an issue of national significance which transcends party politics – members of parliament whatever their political affiliation must achieve a positive outcome on water management for the sake of sustainability of the entire system.

It follows that unless river systems are managed in a sustainable way, which ensures the environment is maintained for the future, there will be no water for critical human needs or irrigation available from that system.

Water management needs to have the interests of all of Australia in mind which means inherently it is a system which must be overseen by the Federal Government of the day.

Water trading and sharing rules must be simplified with a simple, national system across all states.

We urge all Members of Parliament to treat water management as a top priority for the nation and we will continue to watch with interest along with the rest of the nation the 'test case' of the Lower Lakes and Coorong.

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