

# **Additional Comments**

## **Senator Nick Xenophon**

1.1 At the outset, I support the comments made by the Australian Greens in their Minority Report.

1.2 The crisis surrounding the availability of water along the Murray-Darling Basin is the most urgent priority facing this nation. It reflects not only environmental failures but also a gross mismanagement over a sustained period by state governments who can no longer be entrusted with acting in the national interest. The Government's approach to the management of the Murray-Darling Basin fails to reflect the urgency required.

1.3 Whilst I support the comments made in the Majority Report that the Commonwealth work towards a full and unconditional referral of powers relevant to the management of the Murray-Darling Basin, I believe that the urgency of the crisis demands that the Commonwealth introduce legislation to enable a federal takeover of the Murray-Darling Basin system.

1.4 In relation to the Lower Lakes, there should be a priority and emphasis on environmental solutions, particularly bioremediation, to manage the crisis in that part of the Basin if sufficient fresh water cannot be secured. The option of flooding the Lower Lakes with salt water poses significant environmental risks and would cause irreversible damage to the ecosystems of the Lower Lakes.

1.5 In relation to the Coorong, there ought to be urgent priority given to ensuring inflows of seawater to reduce the hypersalinity in the Coorong and consideration of water being piped from the upper south-east drainage scheme.

**Senator Nick Xenophon**

**Independent Senator for South Australia**

