

Water Act Review Secretariat
Water Reform Division
Department of the Environment
GPO Box 787
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SUBMISSION ON REVIEW OF THE WATER ACT 2007

Background

I was the Secretary of the Darling River Action Group, based in Broken Hill, from 2004 to 2013. I am now living in Springwood, Blue Mountains, but maintain an interest in the Murray-Darling Basin.

Submission

I support the continuation of the Water Act 2007 and essential elements of the Basin Plan.

The operations of the Murray Darling Basin Authority and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder must remain independent.

The constraints on water delivery must continue to be assessed and overcome.

State Governments, in particular the New South Wales Government must not be permitted to "white-ant" the Basin Plan and the Water Act.

The achievement of the Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL) will be severely impeded by any cap on water buybacks and the proposed SDL adjustment mechanism

One issue that has not been dealt with (may or may not be a deficiency in the Act) is the current inability to deliver Environmental Water down the Darling River and its tributaries, without that water flow triggering pumping by irrigators. Ideally Environmental Water should be delivered by piggy-backing irrigation flows. Currently Environmental Water is being over-charged for conveyancing. Long term average flows will be maintained, but small flows are being destroyed. Is this a deficiency in the Water Act 2007?

It is important that management of the Basin Plan be independently audited.

Any changes to the Water Act 2007 must not permit Menindee Lakes to be totally emptied. In particular Lake Wetherell is one of the few drought refuges in the whole Darling Basin. It must not be permitted to dry out.

Regards
Brian (Barney) Stevens

B. Stevens
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