

## **SUBMISSION to: REVIEW OF WATER ACT 2007**

The following comments are offered towards the review of the Water Act 2007.

1. DOES THE WATER ACT COMPEL THE MDBA TO SET ABSOLUTE TARGETS FOR WATER RECOVERY?
  - a. If so, **IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE REVISED ACT SHOULD ALLOW FOR A RANGE OF VOLUMES TO ADDRESS TARGETS**
  - b. Background:
    - i. The current Basin Plan specifies recovery targets such as 143 GL for the shared reduction on the Barwon Darling system.
    - ii. This is an extremely precise figure, in a massively variably flowing system where a range would be far more appropriate, meaningful, and able to be better defended.
    - iii. For example, if instead of 143 GL it was described as, say between 130 and 160GL, it is much easier to defend and justify than the current situation of needing to defend or explain to the nearest 1 GL.
  
2. DOES THE WATER ACT PREVENT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL WATER HOLDER FROM HOLDING AND TRADING TEMPORARY WATER?
  - a. If so, **IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE REVISED ACT SHOULD ALLOW THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT TO ACQUIRE TEMPORARY WATER AND TO ALLOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL WATER HOLDER TO HOLD AND TRADE ENVIRONMENTAL WATER.**
  - b. Background:
    - i. Whilst the primary objective is to achieve sustainable levels of take by controlling permanent licence entitlements, the potentially large volumes of temporary water which can accumulate within licence accounts may be problematic in achieving the outcomes of the Basin Plan.
  
3. DOES THE WATER ACT PREVENT THE ENVIRONMENTAL WATER HOLDER FROM TRADING ENVIRONMENTAL WATER FOR A NON-ENVIRONMENTAL PURPOSE?
  - a. If so, **IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE REVISED ACT SHOULD ALLOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL WATER HOLDER TO TRADE ENVIRONMENTAL WATER FOR PURPOSES ADDITIONAL TO SOLELY ACHIEVING ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES.**
  - b. Background:
    - i. There are potential opportunities for Environmental Water to be traded for purposes such as extraction for irrigation without concern that environmental outcomes will be jeopardised.
    - ii. Allowing the Environmental Water holder to participate financially in water trading should increase the flexibility in achieving long term triple bottom line outcomes.

4. DOES THE WATER ACT ADEQUATELY RECOGNISE THAT SOME ENVIRONMENTAL TARGETS CAN NOT BE ADEQUATELY ACHIEVED BY REDUCING THE CURRENT LEVELS OF EXTRACTION IN THE ABSENCE OF OTHER NON-FLOW RELATED STRATEGIES?
  - a. If so, **IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE REVISED ACT SHOULD BE DRAFTED TO ACCOMMODATE FOR NON-FLOW RELATED STRATEGIES WHICH MAY BE CRITICAL IN ACHIEVING DESIRED ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES.**
  - b. Background:
    - i. It is possible that no matter how much the allowable volume of extractions may be reduced in a certain river system, achieving the desired outcome for a key environmental asset may never be possible if the primary or sole “cause of the problem” is non-flow related. An example could be the role that European carp may contribute to the “cause of the problem”.

Thank you for the opportunity of making this submission.

Geoff Wise