



The Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) is a confederation of First Nations in the southern part of the Murray Darling Basin. MLDRIN currently represents 24 First Nations.

MLDRIN was formed in 1998 during the Yorta Yorta Native Title Case. During this time the Yorta Yorta called for a gathering of all the First Nations along the Murray River to come together in solidarity with their cause.

Since that time MLDRIN has played a leading role in establishing the agenda for Aboriginal First Nations in water rights and interests and particularly in promoting the concept of cultural flows as a contemporary means of recognising Aboriginal First Nations rights and responsibilities in water management.

MLDRIN along with NBAN from the northern Basin and NAILSMA provides ongoing advice to the National Cultural Flows Planning and Research Committee regarding cultural flows research and the involvement of Traditional Owners in the southern Murray–Darling Basin.

We thank you for the opportunity to make this submission as part of the *Review of the Water Act 2007*.

It is clear to MLDRIN that the rights and interests of Aboriginal peoples and their First Nations are not being fully recognised in the current Water Act. Our First Nations remain, with minor exceptions, locked out of meaningful participation in water planning and management including beneficial ownership of water entitlements. We are prevented from fully exercising our traditional rights and responsibilities in water management and in so doing practicing our cultures and protecting the health and well-being of our communities.

We submit that the Water Act 2007 (Cth) needs to be amended to achieve the following for Aboriginal Peoples:

- Increased recognition of rights and interests in management of water and its dependent biodiversity.
- Full and informed participation in all aspects of water management.
- Recognition and provision of cultural flows.
- Providing economic water entitlements.
- Significant investment in capacity building.

I apologise for the brevity of this submission which arose because of unforeseen circumstances. MLDRIN will be pleased to provide further detail on this submission should the opportunity arise.

The brevity of this submission in no way reflects the interest of our First Nations wish to participate in the reform of the Water Act and the knowledge and commitment we bring to the process and its potential outcomes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darren W Perry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D' and 'P'.

Darren Perry

Chairperson

Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations