

SUBMISSION COVERSHEET

CONTACT DETAILS	
Name of Organisation (where applicable)	helen dalton
Name of Author	
Phone Number	
Email	
Address	
Website (optional)	
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SUBMISSION DETAILS	<p>SUBMISSION TO THE</p> <p>Murray Darling Basin Royal Commission</p> <p>April 2018</p> <p>Helen Dalton</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>As a Shooter Fishers and Farmers Candidate in the 2017 October State Bi-Election I represent views held by myself and many others in the Murray electorate.</p> <p>In the seat of Murray there are many farm businesses, ranging from broad acre, and intensive food and fibre producers. Such commodities include-: meat, dairy, wool and cotton, grains, to more specialised producers in the horticulture such as egg, chicken, nut, industries.</p>

Responsible management of our precious land and water resources is fundamental to the success of these farm businesses, and the families who own and operate them and to the nation as a whole.

Water is a highly variable and valuable resource that must be planned for and managed efficiently and effectively. Given the cross-border nature of the Basin, having a collective plan is sensible. But to be balanced and effective, and to garner the support of all stakeholders, the Basin Plan must clearly identify and articulate the outcomes it is seeking; recognise and respond to the needs of farmers, communities and environment of the Basin; and be supported by solid investment in infrastructure, research and development.

I am highly supportive if a Royal Commission that takes in all aspects of water management across state lines at both a state and federal level in order to achieve sensible outcomes for water management. This proposed South Australian Royal commission lacks the breath of all water management at state and federal level.

There a number of issued of key expectations for the water reform process:
These are-:

1. a requirement for triple bottom line planning (balancing social, economic and environmental needs);
2. a focus on outcomes, not numbers
3. a robust discussion about the management of the Lower Lakes; and the Coorong
any risks associated with environmental watering to be communicated and avoided.
4. introduction of water metering and compliance in the northern Basin
5. user pays
6. the management of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray mouth, including the environmental impact of the locks, weirs and barrages of the Murray River be reviewed

Process used to determine the Environmentally Sustainable Level of Take

- That the MDBA and the Australian Government make additional resources (and time) available to offer local landholders individual site assessments about the potential risk of impacts from SDL projects.

36 Supply Measure Projects

- The supply measures are light on detail with poor transparency.
- Strong consideration needs to be given to scenarios where there may be alternatives to achieving environmental outcomes without removing water from industries and communities.

Recovery of 450GL for Enhanced Environmental Outcomes

- The 450GL is unachievable and the MDBA should utilise the water they already have without causing economic and social pain in rural regional communities.
- The 450GL if implemented we will see the end of some agricultural industries and associated processing.

- Complementary measures such as carp, fish ladders, control of cold water pollution control should replace the need for recovery of the 450GL.

Water Recovery to Date

- Most areas are over recovered with severe impacts on socio economic on communities.
- We would like to see a shift away from the current fixation on a Sustainable Diversion Limit achievement, and a re-focus on the achievement of a more adaptable management framework for water use. Water policy, particularly for agriculture, needs to be flexible to facilitate sustainable and efficient agriculture, resilient rural communities, ecologies meet our growing domestic and export markets.
- It is questionable the adequacy of the approach implemented for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of environmental outcomes. While there is some monitoring activity for environmental water events, there is a lack of confidence that the systems in place will enable us to measure the effectiveness of the collective environmental watering efforts.
- There is a need to better demonstrate the environmental impacts of water that has already been recovered before further water recovery measures are taken.
- Water policy, needs be flexible to facilitate sustainable and efficient agriculture, resilient communities, and healthy ecologies and to meet our growing domestic and export markets for food and fibre production.

Northern Basin Review

- The 70 GL should be returned to communities in the northern basin as many river systems are over recovered.
- Regulations or the lack of, are not keeping up. There needs to be checks and balances with the harvesting of water.
- Governments are a cultivating a division between the north and south of the state of NSW.

Views of Indigenous People

- Many indigenous communities have been the silent loses as many agriculture jobs that once was have now with the water take been taken away from them.
- This is where the true costs of the basin plan are really felt.
- It is undeniable that removing productive water from businesses and from communities, has had an impact, and a large one.
- One of the large issues at play in the context of impacts, from both a social and economic perspective, is that there is really no single, overall, comprehensive and thorough assessment of the impact of the plan at a sub-regional level. Without a true understanding of the impacts, there is no recognition.
- Impacts are broad and include impacts on jobs, flow on effects to the wider economy, community health and wellbeing, value of land use, and impacts on our long-term food security as a nation.

Illegal Take

- Illegal water take must not be tolerated.
- There are available water meters which would calculate water take. It is not acceptable that water is harvested without these checks and balances.
- A method of metering is needed in the northern basin that accurately records water usage.

- A review of the water sharing plans be implemented immediately and the transfer of water and wealth to some corporate farmers cease.

- The NSW state government has allowed influential corporate farmers to take at will water which should have flowed into the Menindee Lakes and onto the Lower Darling.

Irrigated Crops

- When the water is available irrigated agriculture has a huge role to play in the propriety of rural regional communities and the nation as a whole.

Constitutional Basis for Water Act

- The signing of the Ramras treaty allowing the federal government to take control of water has seen duplication of bureaucracy, and increased costs for rural regional communities.

- The promised streamlining of water management has been disastrous for those living and working in rural communities.

- Blame shifting and governments absolving themselves of responsibility when it suits them has been an art form and people have suffered because of governments inability to achieve practical outcomes.

- The city centric bureaucracy has little knowledge of regional communities and even less respect for our hard working food producers.

Darling River and Menindee Lakes

- That the management of the Menindee Lakes should be placed in the hands of one body that looks after the interests of those directly relying on that water.

- An immediate stop to the Wentworth Broken Hill pipeline.

- The pipeline from the Menindee lakes to Broken Hill be used to provide all water needs to Broken Hill.

- Menindee Lakes be reinstated for recreation for the local inhabitants.

- The Menindee environment be returned as a bird and fish breeding habitat that it once was.

- The South Australia withdraw from any form of control of the Menindee Lakes.

- An engineering solution be implemented as recommended by past case studies.

Deadline for Resource Plans

- Resource plans be completed taking into account concerns form NSW rural regional communities.

- The state government needs to adhere to timelines, the promised water sharing plans did not eventuate leaving uncertainty for rural regional communities.

Environmental and Ecological Health of the Murray-Darling Basin

- Governments stop playing God.

- There is a political expectation that irrigators pay for environmental goods and services.

- Irrigators have been hard hit particularly in the southern connected system where there is an expectation that we should the lion's share of so called environmental outcomes. The nation as a whole need to pay.

- Governments need to assess their management of the environment particularly as a river are impacted by cold water pollution, explosion of carp, thermal pollution, decline in water quality, blue green algae outbreaks

- Environmental watering after excessive flooding doesn't make sense.

Lakes and Coorong

- A basin wide discussion on the Lower Lakes soon as possible, including options for reducing requirements for fresh water.
- A nation-wide conversation about the Coorong as this environment has been in decline since the 1880's and environmental damage would now appear to be irreversible. The continued draining of the nation's financial resources needs to be questioned when this system continues to fail regardless of investment.
- A review of the science by credible scientists such as Peter Gell
- It would appear to be extremely misguided point of view to try and convert an estuarine system at the Lower Lakes in SA into a fresh water one. This is a coastal system and should be treated as one.

SUBMISSION TO THE

Murray Darling Basin Royal Commission

April 2018

Helen Dalton

DOCUMENTS UPLOADED?	No
DECLARATION	I declare that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the submission is made by me or I am authorised to do so by the organisation making the submission• I understand that my submission may be published in full• I understand the Commission may contact me should further information be required. checked