

SUBMISSION COVERSHEET

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CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY	<p>The Royal Commission will treat all submissions as public documents, unless the author has reached a prior agreement with the Commission that the submission be treated as confidential.</p> <p>Public submissions may be published in full on the Commission's website. Your name, organisation (if applicable), and state or territory will be published with your submission.</p> <p>Has the Commissioner provided agreement for the submission to be treated as confidential? No</p>
SUBMISSION DETAILS	<p>Submission to the South Australian Royal Commission</p> <p>by Ron Perry Victoria.</p> <p>I have had an attachment to the rivers all of my 69 years of my life. I was born in , raised on a Soldier Settlement allocation in the . My father had both vines and citrus on the property, which relied on water from the Murray River. My earliest recollection, being bitten by a rakali (water rat), back in 56 or 57. It was in flood water north of . I've never seen water in those flood basins since. With my family, with others, we use to go camping north of on the Darling regularly. I spent my 14th birthday with a mate at our secluded campsite on the river. My father use to fish, using a spinner dragged behind a boat on the Murray. I can remember rowing the boat, while my father would encourage me to stay at a constant speed. Many a good sized cod were caught this way. Fresh water crayfish were also harvested in the months without an "R". There was always a line in the river for a perch or redfin when on both the rivers camping. Remember swimming in the Murray River in the early '60's when it was clear, and you could see the snags and rock ledges, 16ft down, prior to the carp intrusion. Didn't think much about it then, it was just a way of life.</p>

I don't go camping on the Darling now, all you find is stagnant water, and blue-green algae. This way of life has been lost, sadly by the over extraction by the upstream irrigators. There is currently BGA in Tuckers Creek just opposite the Wentworth Wharf.

I feel for the Darling River, as it is dying, for the people, both the indigenous and the settlers of the lower Darling that have their quality of life, and livelihood removed by the greed of the corporate irrigators upstream, in their quest for dollars, by the over extraction of the Darling Rivers waters.

They were not happy with just extracting what was available in the river in their quest for dollars, so they implemented floodplain harvesting, removing water from the environment which the river needs. The current management both State and Federal, have failed in their responsibilities to the Murray Darling Basin's waters and environment.

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Floodplain Harvesting is only taking flowing water that has breached the bank(s) of a river. Just because it's has broken out of the watercourse doesn't mean it has been lost to the river, or the environment. This water still belongs to the river. The environmental cost of the taking of this water, has never been addressed. This must be stopped for the benefit of the environment.

From the NSW website:

Floodplain harvesting is the collection, extraction or impoundment of water flowing across floodplains that is not taken under another water access license, a basic landholder right or a license exemption.

<http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/water-management/law-and-policy/key-policies/floodplain-harvesting>

That is NSW allowing the stealing of water from the environment, without any oversight, or charge. This free water to the irrigators, is at a cost to the environment, which is not addressed in the MDBP.

It's only after Mr Ken Matthews Interim Report that any action was taken by NSW to address this issue of floodplain harvesting and over extraction.

https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/120193/Matthews-interim-report-nsw-water.pdf

The Matthews Interim Report above and the Final Report below, with the Ombudsman NSW Investigation into water compliance and enforcement 2007-2017, will give an insight into how the NSW Government has been undermining the MDBP.

https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/131905/Matthews-final-report-NSW-water-management-and-compliance.pdf

https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/50133/Investigation-into-water-compliance-and-enforcement-2007-17.pdf

In your Issues paper 2 Section 22 and 23 I believe have an imposition on the floodplain harvesting, in the northern Barwon-Darling Region.

This has been going on since irrigation started according to Michael Egan as stated on the ABC website.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-27/murray-darling:-state-plan-to-give-irrigators-water-free-for-all/9763106?pfmredir=sm>

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Over the years the NSW Government have been allowing by turning a blind eye, initially.

Then by endorsing by formulation a Floodplain plan,
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2013-05-02/nsw-water-policy/4665690>

This article sees the endorsement by the cotton industry, but even the President of the Flood Plain Association, Terry Koen, raises concerns. There is no environment comment in the news article.

And by legislation to allow the take from a floodplain, and now, by finally giving free licenses to those that have been removing water from the floodplain.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-27/murray-darling:-state-plan-to-give-irrigators-water-free-for-all/9763106?pfmredir=sm>

And the response from the Gwyder Valley Irrigators Association.
In this they state:

“Irrigators in our region have been legitimately accessing over-bank flows that spill out from our terminal river system (the Gwydir River) and its branches since irrigation development. This form of access is not new, and any entitlement and subsequent allocations provided through the implementation of the Healthy Floodplains program are already estimated as historical take.”

In the MDBA Hydrology models, floodplain water goes into the loss column, where the evaporation loss go. That is floodplain harvesting is not in the Diversions column, but the Loss column. This is not a loss. Floodplain harvested water is still an asset, certainly environmentally and has a dollar value to the harvesters. There would be some return flow into the river, from the floodplain, via creeks along the floodplain..

The statement below is from the Hydrological modelling to inform the proposed Basin Plan. Box 1 Differences between the northern and southern parts of the Murray-Darling Basin. Page 11.

Due to the more ephemeral nature of the rivers in the northern basin and the high level of natural losses due to floodplain inundation and evaporation, there is limited ability to manage flows from the northern basin to achieve environmental outcomes in the River Murray below the Darling River junction.

https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/archived/proposed/Hydro_Modelling_Report.pdf

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The political lobby/donor groups have a lot more clout with the both the Federal and State LNP Governments, and unfortunately the governments listen to them,

instead of the science to provide an environmentally sustainable outcome or ELST as required by the Water Act 2007.

<https://www.gvia.org.au/news/floodplain-facts/>

From the NSW water website, link below.

“How will floodplain harvesting be monitored?”

“There is currently no monitoring of floodplain harvesting diversions. The capacity to monitor floodplain harvesting diversions is one of the significant advantages of bringing these diversions into the licensing framework.”

<http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/water-management/law-and-policy/key-policies/floodplain-harvesting>

That means no-one has any idea how much water is taken, at no monetary cost. But at what is the cost to the environment?

Are these actions have been done deliberately, and have undermined the MDBP and contribute to the over extraction of water from the Barwon-Darling Basin, and are in opposition to the Water Act 2007, as it is removing water from the rivers for irrigation without considering the ESLT or the environmental impact?

This obsession to hand water to the Cotton Irrigators, seems to reflect the donations to the National Party, yes? If I scratch your back, you scratch mine, smells of corruption?

I would also like to bring to the attention of the Commissioner, the recent Water Augmentation report by the NSW Government released on 14th May 2018.

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2390>

The terms of reference:

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/2390/Terms%20of%20reference%20-%20Water%20augmentation.pdf>

This report I believe is in breach of the Water Act 2007, as it doesn't address an ESLT.

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From the Reports and Government Responses link, the recommendations: Summary of Key Issues:

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/2390/Summary%20of%20key%20issues%20and%20recommendations.pdf>

Augmentation of water supply for rural and regional New South Wales (Full Report)

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/2390/Augmentation%20of%20water%20supply%20for%20rural%20and%20regional%20New%20South%20Wales.pdf>

Recommendation 4

That the NSW Government work with regional communities and the federal government to unlock the full agricultural production potential of regional New South Wales.

Recommendation 5

That the NSW Government, as a matter of urgency and in consultation with regional communities, develop a comprehensive water equation for supply and demand in New South Wales by March 2020, for the next 50 years.

Recommendation 6 That the NSW Government work with regional communities to fund and conduct long-term strategic planning for the security of water in rural and regional areas.

Recommendations 4, 5 and 6 raise my concerns for a sustainable outcome for the environment. Do they comply with the Water Act 2007?

Recommendation 8

That the NSW Government support a federal Royal Commission into the administration of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Perhaps you could invite the NSW Government to honour this Recommendation by joining you in this Royal Commission?

Recommendation 28

That the NSW Government consider designating conveyance as an environmental flow.

This is only a way of shifting water from the irrigation "column" to the environment "column", and should be stopped. It also mean any flow in a channel/canal that it lost through seepage or evaporation could be designated at environmental water, which it isn't.

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Recommendation 40

That the NSW Government consider establishing a storm water and/or flood harvesting pilot program for flood mitigation in the Northern Rivers.

A number of block banks have been recommended. Unfortunately, block banks are ideal for BGA to flourish. We need flow, not block banks, to maintain the supply for stock and domestic uses.

Other recommendations do have an impact on the MDBP, under scrutiny, they may or may not, comply with the Water Act 2007?

I request you include the Water Augmentation report in the Commission's deliberations, as it has an impact on the future of the MDBP being able to deliver the requirement of the Water Act 2007.

NSW Water Sharing Plans need to be investigated, as they do not address the Barwon -Darling River or Lower Darling supply. They only address in valley use, and do not address the downstream needs.

<http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/water-management/water-sharing>

Also the number of licences types, allocations and the ability of unlimited take in the Northern Basin needs to be addressed, as this is having an impact on the Darling River below Bourke, where it is now regular Blue Green Algae occurrences make the water unusable for consumption, posing a danger to stock, and wildlife.

An article in the Northern Daily Leader newspaper references environmental flows being slashed due to Barnaby Joyce's lobbying. Is this political interference in environmental flows, or just a beat up?

<https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/5379217/environmental-water-release-doused-following-irrigator-concern/?cs=159>

This article from the Stock and Land is concerning to me, with it drawing water from the Murray River.

Kilter Rural chief executive Cullen Gunn said the company managed more than \$214 million of water, farmland and ecosystem assets.
"The one downer we have at the moment is the lack of policy around ecosystem markets – getting paid for producing improvements in ecological condition, it is the holy grail, that hasn't happened yet," Mr Gunn said.

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The land is owned by VicSuper and managed by Kilter Rural through its Future Farming Landscapes investment model.

<https://www.stockandland.com.au/story/4513188/policy-change-needed-ceo/>
Is there enough water available to maintain the permanent plantings as well as cotton as a cash crop?

Reading the below Memorandum of Understanding below, the MDBA and NRAR, it seems to me that they are more concerned about their public image, than carrying out their individual roles. This raises the question of the aims and competence, of both organisations.

https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/157049/NRAR-MDBA-signed-memorandum-of-understanding.pdf

In this submission, I have raised questions of flawed science, incompetence, rorting and the damage to the Murray Darling Basin environment by these practises.

I hope this submission may assist the Commission in it's deliberations.

Thank You
Ron Perry.

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DOCUMENTS UPLOADED?	No
DECLARATION	<p>I declare that:</p> <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. <p>checked</p>