



To: The Murray Darling Basin Authority Board (The Authority)

From: The Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations (Traditional Owner Advice Committee)

Please find set out below our assessment of the Queensland Governments Water Resource Plan for the Four Pack which includes the following rivers, Nebine, Paroo, Bullo and Warrego.

Overall we felt that the requirements of Chapter 10 Part 14 of the Basin plan was met, however it took 3 attempts to include and get it right in regards to Traditional Owners objectives and outcomes based on their Values and Uses as required by the Basin Plan.

We felt that in the first round Traditional Owners were not consulted and that there was very little consultation in round 2. We felt that round 3 was much more targeted at Traditional Owners which lead to a much better outcome.

We found that during the process Aboriginal Protocols were not followed in all cases and there was no feedback to the people that were involved in the consultations.

We found that the Queensland Government identified some objectives and outcomes and they recorded these in the document. They produced a document that could be used to assist in the development an action plan for each of the Traditional Owner groups to achieve their objectives and outcomes.

Recommendation:

The NBAN Traditional Owner Advice Committee recommends this section of the Four Pack Water Resource Plan be recommended to the Minister for accreditation.

Fred Hooper
NBAN Chair
27 April 2016

1. Was a planned approach applied to properly engaging Traditional Owners and resulted in an Aboriginal Engagement Strategy that guided preparation of the water resource plan? (e.g. adequate time, appropriate venues and resources)

Yes.

There were three rounds of consultation, The first round was general consultation, the second round was held through the South West NRM body which held a meeting in Charleville and the third round was a more targeted approach with meetings being held in Bollon, Cunnamulla, Quilpie, Augathella, Roma, Charleville and Toowoomba. However feedback has not been provided back to Aboriginal people who attended these meetings and we feel that proper Aboriginal protocols were not followed during this process.

There is evidence that the consultations in the third round were advertised in the media, and flyers were sent out and the QLD Government sent flyers through the QNTS to Native Title applicants etc.

NBAN Advice to MDBA

The QLD Government has met the requirements under the Basin Plan Water Resource Plan Requirements Position Statements 14a, however there are 3 qualifications:

1. We feel that the proper Aboriginal Protocols were not followed and
2. No written reports and feedback has been provided to the participants as promised during the consultation process.
3. Traditional Owners should be the first peoples consulted during all consultation processes.

Please see notes in point 6.

WATER RESOURCE PLAN AREA	QLD Four Pack Water resource planning area Nebine, Warrego, Bullo and Paroo
HPRM (TRIM) DOCUMENT NUMBER	
ADVICE PROVIDED BY	NBAN Traditional Owner Advice Committee

2. Appropriate Traditional Owners were identified and involved throughout all stages of the water planning process.

NO

We have reviewed the documents and processes and found that there were no Aboriginal Nations or Traditional Owners identified and involved in the first round of consultations, however the second and third rounds of consultations was Traditional Owners specific.

NBAN Advice to MDBA

That the QLD Government has partly met this requirement because, Traditional Owners and their nations were not involved or did not participate in the first round of consultations. We advise that in this process the QLD Government failed to follow proper cultural protocol during their consultations in the first round.

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4. Traditional Owners were properly notified of the opportunities to be involved in the water resource planning process, (e.g. print, phone, electronic and personal media and town meetings)

Yes.

We found during the review of the documents provided that the QLD Government adequately notified Traditional Owner groups through the above mediums. However, it should be noted that these mediums are not always the best way of engaging Traditional Owners.

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4. Information about water resource planning processes and content provided was clear to Traditional Owners

Yes.

From feedback information received from some of the Traditional Owners who attended the meetings held in the third round the content was adequately provided to Traditional Owners.

Some of the Traditional Owners who attended the second round meeting in Charleville were also present at the NBAN assessment meeting held in St George on 20 and 21 April 2016. These Traditional Owners felt that there was adequate information provided at the meeting in Charleville.

However we feel that there was no specific Aboriginal engagement during the first round of consultations.

NBAN Advice to MDBA

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5. Appropriate tools and mechanisms for recording, understanding and incorporating Aboriginal objectives and outcomes were used.

Yes.

In round one this did not occur however in both the second and third rounds this did occur.

NBAN Advice to MDBA

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6. Other comments or advice.

COMMENTS:

The advice provided to NBAN is that Traditional Owners of the Nations whose lands and waters are part of the Four Pack Water Resource Plan that during the initial stages of the consultation process they were ignored by the QLD Government.

It was only with constant pressure put upon the QLD Government from the Nations that there was Traditional Owner specific engagement in rounds two and round three.

We feel that in some cases proper Nations protocols have not been followed during the notification process. IE. Some of the influential elders who hold knowledge were not consulted when advised by the consultation meetings.

ADVICE:

1. That in future the proper Nations protocols are to be followed when engaging Traditional Owners in future water resource planning.
2. When organising consultation meetings where they involve Nations and Traditional Owners should be the first port of call and then Nations leaders etc.
3. That written reports and feedback must be provided to the participants of the consultation meeting no later than 30 days after the finalisation of the first draft of the WRP.
4. That the advice given by the NBAN delegates who represent the Traditional Owners on the newly formed QLD WRP advisory committee be very strongly considered when given.

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7. Overall Recommendation to the Authority.

Recommendation:

The NBAN Traditional Owner Advice Committee recommends the Four Pack Water Resource Plan be recommended to the Minister for accreditation because it has met the requirements of Chapter 10 Part 14 of the Basin Plan and other sections that relate to Aboriginal peoples.

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