



**Dr Anne Jensen**  
**Environmental Consultant**

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Hon Malcolm Turnbull  
Prime Minister of Australia  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

28 August 2016

Dear Prime Minister,

**RE: URGENT NEED FOR ACTION TO SECURE ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS IN DARLING RIVER**

The Murray Darling Basin Plan is close to unravelling, and needs the attention of the Prime Minister again. You stood with John Howard when he set out to save the Murray-Darling Basin, and this Plan was the outcome of your joint efforts. The Plan now needs your active support to achieve full implementation, to ensure the return of essential environmental flows needed to maintain the health of the river system for all dependent communities, both upstream and downstream.

The Plan is under threat from upstream irrigators who are resisting the necessary reductions in water allocations. The current actions of New South Wales are under-mining implementation of the return of environmental water to the stressed Darling River system under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Stricter, more effective shepherding rules are needed and science-based rules are required to guide effective delivery of limited environmental water.

As you would be aware, the Darling River ceased to flow earlier this year, with serious ecological and social impacts. My colleagues on the Darling River tell me that Queensland had sent its share of environmental flows downstream in good faith, but two prominent New South Wales irrigators grabbed a windfall at the expense of the health of downstream rivers and users. Little if any environmental water passed Bourke and it is possible that in future years it won't reach Bourke at all. If this situation continues, the health of the Darling River will decline and the two main rivers of the Murray Darling Basin will become disconnected systems.

Unless these issues are addressed urgently, the intent of the Basin Plan to return environmental water to river systems will not be achieved. Cubby Station and other Queensland irrigators delivered their share of environmental water in good faith, but New South Wales did not follow suit. Strong direction and leadership is needed from the Commonwealth Government, and support for South Australia, Victoria and Queensland in calling the New South Wales government to account for failure to enforce the rules, for the sake of all downstream users and the health of the Basin.

You were part of the historic stand taken to rescue the Basin and to put its management on a sustainable footing. Your interest is needed again, to keep the Basin Plan on track and to ensure that environmental flows are delivered as promised.

I am a member of Ambassadors for a Healthy River Murray, a group of concerned citizens with widely varied backgrounds who are united by a common love and concern for the Murray-Darling Basin and achieving the effective implementation of the Basin Plan.

I understand that you have received an invitation from our group to visit the Darling River and to meet with Ambassadors member Howard Jones to view the situation on the ground. Howard is a respected irrigator and conservationist from Dareton near Mildura, and he has known the Darling system intimately for 44 years, understands its ecology and communities, and has watched its decline. He is uniquely placed to show you the problems, introduce you to local community leaders and talk about solutions.

The Ambassadors group is inviting all South Australian and Victorian state and federal parliamentarians to visit the Darling River, including Sen Anne Ruston, Hon Rebekha Sharkie, Hon Tony Pasi, Hon Ian Hunter and Hon Tim Whetstone. We hope that a group visit of concerned politicians can be organised urgently, to address these real-time problems on the Darling River.

We hope that you will be able to take up our invitation. Howard Jones can be contacted at to arrange a visit to the Darling River at a convenient time.

I am also happy to provide further technical information on the science behind environmental flow requirements, and to provide information on local environmental watering projects in the South Australian River Murray Valley.

The active support of the Prime Minister is needed to ensure that the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is implemented effectively, and that the process you started in 2006 is completed to secure the future of this critical resource.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Jensen

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Linked in profile: <http://lnkd.in/eA8u7W>

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