



The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP

Minister for Agriculture
Federal Member for New England

Ref: MC16-007807

Dr Anne Jensen

11 OCT 2016

Dear Dr Jensen

I refer to your letter of 28 August 2016 to the Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, regarding environmental flows in the Darling River. As this matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities, the Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter and to respond on his behalf.

The Basin Plan and associated reforms represent a substantial investment in the future of the Murray-Darling Basin and the nation.

I am aware of the community concerns being raised about the management of the Barwon-Darling system, in particular whether current arrangements are adequately protecting the increased environmental flows available as a result of water recovery efforts further upstream. In this context I note that while there is an important principle underlying the Basin Plan of having no negative impacts on the reliability of water users entitlements, it is equally important that water being recovered for the environment is able to achieve its intended purpose.

The current management arrangements for the Barwon-Darling are embodied in the relevant NSW State water sharing plan. I am advised that the state plan includes limits for licenced entitlement holders that are designed to provide no growth in use over the long-term, taking into consideration the highly variable nature of flows in this system.

As part of the review of Basin Plan settings being undertaken by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority for the northern Basin, the appropriateness of existing rules is under consideration.

Thank you for taking the time to write to the Prime Minister with your concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Barnaby Joyce', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Barnaby Joyce MP