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**Government
of South Australia**

**Office of the Minister for
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Mr Bret Walker SC
Commissioner
Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission
GPO Box 1445
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26 JUN 2018

Dear Mr Walker

Please find attached the Government of South Australia's submission to the Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission.

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan was borne out of the collective need to address the environmental strains felt across the entire basin. It is a large and significant move to restore the balance across the Basin between environmental health and consumptive uses and continues to have the bipartisan support of the Australian Parliament and five state and territory governments.

Successful implementation of the Basin Plan in 2024 means that Basin governments and communities will have achieved environmental outcomes equivalent to a water recovery of 3,200 gigalitres. This will be a significant achievement.

The Basin Plan is far from an ideal plan. However, it provides all Basin jurisdictions with a framework and clear targets to work towards.

South Australia continues to advocate for the health of the River Murray and the recent bipartisanship demonstrated by the federal Coalition Government and federal Labor Party in securing the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism Amendment was a positive moment in progressing the Basin Plan. From this state's perspective, the delivery of the 450 gigalitres that the Australian Government has committed to progress is critical to achieving floodplain and end-of-system outcomes.

The Basin Plan is a long term policy change and there are still six years until implementation of this first step is fully completed. While many areas of Basin Plan implementation are on track, it is important to remember that it will take many years for the full effects of the Basin Plan to be observed, particularly in regards to improvements in ecosystem health.

This Basin Plan is required to undergo a process of reconciliation in 2024, meaning that we are approximately half-way through the plan's implementation. This is a critical juncture where failure to progress the Basin Plan to its completion would see the waste of years of hard work, billions of dollars of investment and the attainment of genuine environmental and

economic sustainability. The impact would be felt across the Basin and markedly so at the end of the system in South Australia.

The Government of South Australia considers that full and effective implementation of the existing Basin Plan policy framework remains the best option to deliver a healthy working river for the benefit of the environment, industries and communities across the Basin. It is our view that additional significant legislative or policy changes at this stage would, somewhat perversely, have the potential to impede implementation, thereby undermining the achievement of real enhanced environmental outcomes.

This submission responds to the matters that South Australia is in a position to respond to in the Commission's Issues Paper Numbers 1 and 2. The submission contains extensive referencing to publicly available sources of information and has been drafted with the intent of supporting the Commission by minimising the need to call witnesses. If the Commission does require witnesses to attend hearings or provide further information on topics, the Government of South Australia will respond in a timely manner.

If you require further information on this matter, please feel free to contact Mr Ben Bruce, Group Executive Director, Water within the Department for Environment and Water by e-mail at: ben.bruce@sa.gov.au or telephone: (08) 8463 6945.

South Australia will always advocate strongly for the River Murray and now is the time for all Basin jurisdictions to work together to deliver the Basin Plan, thereby continuing the restoration of the Basin's health. The South Australian Government remains committed to working with other jurisdictions to implement the Basin Plan in full and on time in 2024.

Yours sincerely



DAVID SPEIRS MP
Minister for Environment and Water

18th June 2018

Encl: 1. South Australian Government Submission to the Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission.