

30 April 2018

Ms Carolyn Lee
Director
Murray Darling Basin Royal Commission

Dear Ms Lee

RE: Submission to the Murray Darling Basin Royal Commission

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Murray Darling Basin Royal Commission and to examine further those questions within the terms of reference.

Agriculture is of vital importance to the residents of the Narromine Shire Council area and those that live in this Western and North Western region of New South Wales. Almost 30% of our local workforce are employed in the Agricultural sector and the sector contributes more than \$200M to our regional output.

Of particular importance to the long term sustainability of our region and any growth that may occur, is the need to ensure the security of water and just as importantly ensure that the policies and rules in regards to water issues are understood and transparent so that future investment can occur.

There is no doubt that the recovery targets that have been set have disadvantaged those in the Northern Basin and in particular the Narromine community and those that live along the Narromine and Warren stretch of the Macquarie River. There is little evidence to suggest that the water that has been recovered will make any difference to the health of the Macquarie Marshes or improve environmental outcomes further downstream. Despite assurances that the economic and social wellbeing of our communities would be considered in the setting of recovery targets this has not been the case.

The Murray Darling Basin Authority- Northern Basin Review highlights that Narromine is one of the towns most affected by the Basin Plan. The Review found that there is now 18% less irrigated area as a result of the review and a decline in local employment of between 50 and 60 positions. While the Northern Basin Review sought to reduce the recovery targets across the Northern Basin the politics of the day determined that this would not be the case.

The terms of reference ask for comment in regards to the likelihood of the desired outcomes of the Water Act being achieved. Legislation within the Water Act seeks to balance the environmental objectives of the Basin Plan with the impacts to businesses and communities throughout the Basin. The Basin Plan has not achieved this and it is also questionable whether any environmental benefits have been achieved.

In regards to the issue of enforcement of compliance the community expectation of this is very clear. Community members including irrigators and those in the industry would expect that enforcement of the rules should be carried out. Generally speaking it would seem that the enforcement powers are adequate but the resourcing of the enforcement is poor.

Overall we would seek that the recovery targets of individual communities are more fully considered in line with social and economic effects. We would also expect that the environmental objectives are actually achieved in return for the reduction in local economic activity.

Yours faithfully

Jane Redden
General Manager



Please address all correspondence to the General Manager,