



Country Mayors Association of NEW SOUTH WALES

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Productivity Commission

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To whom it may concern

I refer to your recent Issues Paper regarding the five year assessment of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan (**Basin Plan**) and welcome the opportunity to provide feedback into this. We have many member councils along this critical waterway and so understandably this is a matter of great importance to our Association.

The agricultural industry supports much of rural and regional NSW. Water security is critical to ensure the ongoing sustainability of farmers, graziers and the communities that they operate in. The recent Senate decision to block the Federal Government's changes to the Basin Plan was extremely unhelpful to the farmers and graziers, adding a layer of uncertainty to an already challenged industry. The proposal to reduce the water recovery targets north of the basin by 70 gigalitres was a sensible one and represented a fair decision. This uncertainty is making forward projections and budgeting extremely difficult for these operators.

We advocate that those who are best placed to provide advice and support local water management are locals, including local councils. No one manages water better than the locals. Notwithstanding this, as a sector we have consultation fatigue on this topic and this is only worsened by the fact that it does not appear that much of the feedback provided has produced tangible outcomes. We are not being listened to or engaged with effectively and are not being provided the information needed to better understand the outcomes that have been achieved. Significant improvements in this area are needed to ensure the success of the Basin Plan into the future.

Should you wish to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely

Cr Katrina Humphries
Chairperson
Country Mayors Association of NSW