



## River Lakes and Coorong Action Group Inc

### **Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications: Water Amendment (Long Term Average Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment) Bill 2012**

The River Lakes and Coorong Action Group believes that a healthy whole Murray Darling Basin River system is fundamental to achieving cl 100 of the Australian Constitution: *Nor abridge right to use water*

The Commonwealth shall not, by any law or regulation of trade or commerce, abridge the right of a State or of the residents therein to the reasonable use of the waters of rivers for conservation or irrigation.

The RLCAG has made some 19 submissions on environmental matters. The organisation remains an independent voice for the environment in the region of the mouth of the Murray River. This area experiences the brunt of upstream activity and over-allocation. Successful interpretation of the Water Act 2007 is critical to people in this region.

We understand that this Bill proposes to amend the *Water Act 2007* to: enable the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to make adjustments to the long-term average sustainable diversion limit set by the Murray-Darling Basin Plan; and require the basin plan requirements for accreditation of water resource plans to include a requirement that water resource plans include a mechanism for incorporating and adjusting a relevant change in the limit for that water resource plan area.

1. In 10 S 23 we support the interpretation that a long-term average sustainable diversion limit remains an environmentally sustainable level of take.
2. We welcome the requirement for the Murray Darling Basin authority to provide notices outlining the material on which it has based its decision to adjust water extraction limits.
3. However we are concerned that the Bill requires the Minister to adopt the amendment as soon as practicable after receiving it.

4. We ask that there should be a process of investigation of any amendment proposed by the MDBA, with public participation.

5. We ask that this process should be overseen by the Minister.

The implementation of a Murray Darling Basin Plan is a new process with many unknown factors, not all predictable. It is desirable that there should be the utmost transparency and reflection at all stages of implementation.

The ongoing oversight of the Minister is also necessary to protect the Murray Darling Basin Authority from undue influence from any one sector.

For further information please contact:

Elizabeth Tregenza

Secretary, River Lakes and Coorong Action Group