



ACT
Government

Environment, Planning and
Sustainable Development

Ref # 17/07507

Dr Jane Doolan
Commissioner
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2
Collins Street East
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Dear Dr Doolan

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the National Water Reform Inquiry and respond to matters raised in the recently released Issues Paper.

The ACT is pleased to contribute to the assessment of the progress in achieving the objectives, outcomes and timeliness under the Intergovernmental Agreement on the National Water Initiative (NWI) particularly with respect to the ACT's requirements.

The ACT notes the focus of the terms of reference for the inquiry and acknowledges that there is scope for improving the NWI and addressing current and future challenges faced by the water sector including the role of governments.

Since the last assessment of the NWI in 2014, the ACT has undertaken a number of initiatives and measures with regard to water planning and management particularly in the urban and rural/urban context and water quality improvement. This includes:

- The release in August 2014 of the ACT's Water Strategy, Striking the Balance 2014-44 and related implementation plan with its outcomes of:
 - healthy catchments and waterbodies,
 - a sustainable water supply used efficiently and
 - a community that values and enjoys clean, healthy catchments;
- the ACT Healthy Waterways Project covering six sub-catchments across the Territory, aimed at improving water quality and also establishing an integrated water quality monitoring system for the ACT;
- the establishment of the ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group in 2015 (a statutory body);
- reforms to water sensitive urban design
- review of the ACT's environmental flow guidelines which determine environmental water management;
- development of Source modelling for water quantity and water quality which will assist water planning, management and water quality monitoring;

- ongoing meaningful engagement with the traditional owners of the ACT in water planning; and
- consideration of options to better resource operations and maintenance of water quality assets in the ACT.

In general, the ACT has sought to implement a whole-of-life cycle water management approach to water management which closely involves the ACT water utility, Icon Water.

The ACT is also seeking to progress inter-state water trading with New South Wales. This has importance for a number of reasons but especially in the context of the future growth of the ACT and south-eastern NSW region.

On a related aspect, the ACT has been meeting its Basin Plan requirements including where practicable compliance with Basin water trading rules.

The ACT is pleased to be able to review the evidence base for the assessment of NWI progress for the ACT component and provide any related response to the Productivity Commission. Please contact Mr Matt Kendall for more detail on the ACT initiatives listed above.

Yours sincerely

Ben Ponton
Director General
Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

28.4.17