

## Brief comments received

No.	Comment
1.	A lot of people say buybacks are cheaper or more efficient. If you only count input \$ this may be true, but does not take into account all the costs to the communities as these are usually hard to quantify. This also means those communities are wearing these costs. Any consideration of buybacks needs to include all costs (including hard to cost ones) and who is paying. Projects should be given more time to complete. There should be consideration of a longer term strategic approach to the plan that takes into account a hotter and drier climate. le: is there actually going to be enough water to do all the things we think we need to or are there harder lessons coming that the market won't solve. If you can't measure water used, you shouldn't be able to extract it. This should be starting point now as there has been years of experience and time to do this already. Constraints need to be dealt with asap, they are hard but need to start
2.	Stop taking the water back off farmers through security
3.	The MDBP destroyed a lot of our environment. No environmental study was done on the channels, creeks and waterways, before they removed channels or lined them in black plastic. Willow trees were removed even though locals had told NCCM that platypus lived under them. Locals were never listened too and still aren't. So many species lost their homes or were killed with all the modernisation to take water from our environment in Northern Victoria. Deplorable, destructive plan and still you want to take more water from our area. An absolute disaster of a plan.
4.	Are you listening to the meetings? Do you care about riverbank erosion and trees falling in the river? Do you care about salinity from permanent plantings? Do you care about schools and businesses failing? Do you really believe there is a 'sand slug'??? The MDBA Plan needs reviewing. Sending more water to South Australia for votes is not acceptable and damaging to the Murray River. The Menindee Lakes/Darling River draining was a disgrace.
5.	So disappointed with the implementation of the Murray Darling plan the water was traded and moved like a bank commodity the movements were very destructive to the river with erosion from high flows. The plan has made a lot of irrigated land less productive as artificially inflated water prices have led to trade being the objective to create profit rather than agriculture. the whole thing is faulty and should be wiped to start again
6.	I want to know why the MDBA is not listening to communities and locals? The triple bottom line is being ignored The increased water held in storages means in an average or wet year we will get flooded and dry periods we will be back to low or no allocation.. makes it near impossible to farm on the rivers that are being used to deliver "environmental" water Why is no credit being given to on farm wetlands and ecosystems? Significant bird, frog life etc maintained by farmers

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7.	The Murray Darling Basin plan has created the biggest humanitarian disaster in the history of Australia. Stop and think about that: Communities dieing. Bank foreclosures. Walk off's. Suicides. Communities losing hope. Land grabs. Population reduction resulting in services being removed. Mental health sky-rocketing. People losing hope. Generational farmers lost due to corporate buy up. The list goes on. For what? Corporate greed. Political sabotage. Pure and simple. Feel free to contact me. I'm not scared to tell what I see have learnt on my journey.
8.	The plan is failing the environment it was put in place for, our communities and people. The only ones who profit are the investors, and the politicians who don't have to disclose their water holdings and make the decisions. Usually this is a conflict of interest- but no they get away with it. The ridiculous amount of money spent on water savings resulted in the theft of the overland flows, this is a breach of the human rights charter.
9.	Without water being delivered through the basin plan in NW Victoria, we the Latji Latji Mumthelang people believe we are being subjected to bias and non-representation under the self determination legislation. Water not being delivered as promised by the state and commonwealth. NW Victoria from Swan Hill to the South Australian boarder along the Murray river is rich, pronounced and identified as settlements throughout history encompassing archaeological evidence recorded throughout the CHMP compliance activities of the Basin Plans promise of delivery to put water back in our floodplains. Some of theses areas world heritage worthy.
10.	Never forget..... a man walked 303 km from Barham to Hume Dam to raise awareness of the MDBA debacle and people in authority chose to ignore him.....in particular our Federal Minister for Farrer, Sussan Ley, who at that time was the Minister for Water & the Environment, (perfectly placed to be of help) abandoned her constituents. This is what we are up against
11.	When fining an irrigator caught taking more than licenced for, add a further penalty of a loss of a portion of their water entitlement that is transferred to the Environmental Water Holder. Many do not understand that the MDBP follows directions set out in the Water Act. Many farmers complain that their voices are not heard. Its not a surprise when their comments should be directed at the Water Act and not the MDBP. Its a point of confusion and frustration.
12.	There is some misunderstanding of what an environmental flow is. Some landholders say a portion of their irrigation water should count as benefitting the environment as their land might have some natural features, fauna or flora on it. For example having a variety of birds on their place. Farm irrigation is all about farm production and not timed for ecological purposes. Environmental flows are timed for ecological goals and benefit of flora and fauna. This distinction needs explaining at every opportunity.
13.	What a joke, you are not interested in what the public thinks. Your agenda of taking water from productive farm land and running it out to sea is driven by politics. SA senators and greenies control the politics. The government has been bought by overseas super funds . Your effort to make water a commodity was successful. Wait until you see how food prices rise. But you don't give a toss.
14.	The University of Southern Queensland has been involved in research to justify management decisions and regulatory approvals as well as supporting investment prospectuses, however the research may be tainted.
15.	My husband and I are big environmentalists, for over 30 years. We have carried out major revegetation projects, weed eradication and feral animal eradication projects over that time. My husband has been responsible for planting successfully up to 250,000 trees for farmers and various Government

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	<p>departments. Since the implementation of the Basin Plan we have seen a massive decline in our environment. The funding that was used for revegetation, weed and feral animal eradication has been shifted into so called " Environmental Projects" which in most cases have done massive amounts of damage to the environment and ecology of our local and surrounding areas. The money has become a funding stream to keep Government Departments operating, with no independent audits to verify the so called positive outcomes they are achieving. In fact most of these projects have been very expensive and hugely damaging to our area. Examples include, black plastic lining of channels or removal of channels to be replaced with pipes and electric pumps in waterways that have been in our area for over 75 years. No environmental impact studies were done before all this work was carried out or after. Community members know that huge amounts of species lost their homes, this includes, platypus, rakali, frogs, fish, shrimps, yabbies, turtles, mussels, birds, reptiles, and other micro-invertebrate. Birds and animals can longer use the waterways for their feed or drink. It has been devastational. The fish ladders that have been put into our waterways by these authorities are made using massive amounts of concrete, exorbitant sums of money and they don't work correctly. No environmental offsets were planted to compensate for the carbon producing concrete. The MDB Plan has provided Departments with massive amounts of money to do massive amounts of environmental damage, with no Community consultation before hand. They don't listen to local knowledge or engage with Community members who have worked in the environment or been interactive with our environments. The MDB Plan has caused the complete destruction of the environment in our area of Cohuna and Gunbower in Northern Victoria. The amount of time and effort we have put in writing letters to Government Departments, organising various Government officials to the area with no results! This will be just another pointless exercise! When will you listen???</p>
16.	<p>5 years; yet another productivity commission review, only to find nothing has changed ! when will government listen to the increasingly angry , frustrated landholders and communities affected most by policies that are archaic and not fit for purpose in this changed landscape ,coincidentally caused by the initial over regulation of river systems ... by you guessed it .. government ! Easing of constraints, for example programmes offered under northern basin toolkit are seriously underfunded ,and do not deal with the real problem of so many layers of water being enabled to be returned to the landscape , inundating private landholders ,not recognising them monetarily for the environmental outcomes they provide , adaptive management basically means in a good rainfall year there is the ability from both state and federal govt to release more water to support all sorts of ecological ,and migratory bird outcomes ,with total disregard for landholders who were forced to change enterprise to cropping due to govt policy allowing for the demise of the wetlands .. low level banks and crossings and yet more modelling , as envisaged in current reconnecting watercourse programme will not mitigate their loses ,there is a huge socioeconomic impact ,rather than buying more water, better manage existing entitlements, properly fund constraints programmes to support the areas that this water is being returned to ,such as developing an agricultural conservation risk insurance scheme and paid passage through designated flow paths in watercourses etc that are now predominately farmed but are needed for wetland connectivity especially to Ramsar sites , through this type of innovative policy only then could the triple bottom line as required by water act 2007 be met .</p>
17.	<p>Implementation of basin plan ,What a mess ... no transparency ,no stakeholder engagement ,landholders actually have the historic local knowledge yet are totally ignored ,no strategic advice and guidance to policy makers as to how resource management needs to adapt and evolve to manage risks ,in particular the constraints programme needs to better recognise private landholders for ecological outcomes on private properties and remunerate them adequately for the environmental outcomes they manage and provide for society .. hundreds of millions of dollars have been lost through third party inundation caused through no constraints programmes being in place , although policies still allow environmental water managers to continue to deliver</p>

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	<p>water unabated under the wsp's rules ....this has been going on since 2013 and still nothing ; with no accountability from either state or federal government as to who is liable for this inundation ,no wonder landholders are frustrated and angry , how can it be ok for a government dept to build a 400 metre bank directly across a flood way to hold water up in a national park , yet if landholders did the same thing it is deemed unlawful ... very much a double standard . A structured pathway to deliver efficiency measures was an out come of the last pc inquiry ,as the above shows that is a joke ,all that has happened is a massive amount of taxpayers money has been spent by politicians and bureaucrats with absolutely no idea of what is at stake ,landholders being part of an ewag or sap advisory group is just a political tick and flick to meet the stated needs of the wsp ... enough is enough , new legislation and innovative policy is needed ,not just a buy more water and pour it back on mentality , our regional economies are being decimated through this approach ,whilst still not achieving best environmental returns</p>
18.	<p>There is no economy on a dead river.</p>
19.	<p>I don't believe this is working. Environmental water is not being used effectively (cue floods, trees getting too much water, e.g. forests, and the amount of environmental water in storages). Why can't excess environmental water be available to farmers when storages are full?. Farmers are being overlooked and there will be issues with food production if this plan is not amended</p>
20.	<p>Since the Murray Basin Plan has come in we have watched our environment being decimated, millions of dollars being wasted on building massive man made structures to apparently " save the environment", farmers leaving the dairy industry in large numbers and the ones staying, turning their operations into massive polluting barn style operations, where cows live in barns 24 hours a day being fed silage and grain. No longer feeding on fresh grass in open paddocks. It has been stated that cows treated this way do not last as long as they once did. Irrigation channels that were once gravity fed and sustainable are now, plastic lined ( death traps for many animals ) or driven through plastic pipes using electric pumps. There are electric pumps dotted everywhere in our district, a once natural gravity fed system has become a power guzzling eyesore. Our irrigation channels were once water sources and homes for massive amounts of different creatures, birds, turtles, frogs, yabbies, shrimp, fish, snakes and more. We have seen many dead bodies floating, including, wallabies, kangaroos, snakes, foxes unable to climb out of these death traps. Our local Gunbower Forest has been turned into a "wetland" by the North Central Catchment Management who use it as their funding stream. NCCM are based in Bendigo, 11/2 drive from Cohuna. They have flooded our forest three years running even though we have had natural floods. They claim historically it was wet 7 out of 10 years and yet in the 1800's we had timber mills providing the wood for farmers, and paddle steamers. How would they source timber if the forest was constantly flooded?? NCCM also state this wetland is home to thousands of birds nesting and yet locals who paddle out there on a regular basis find no such thing, on last count last month they saw 15 birds nesting at the most. A lie being told constantly to the public by NCCM through large double page advertisements in the local papers. Our local Doctor is worried that there is longer any goat moths around because of the forest floor being inundated with water for more than 6 months of the year. A food source for many birds, he has also noted that the mussel numbers have dropped significantly in the Gunbower Creek, which is now held high all year round. Another part of our environment being destroyed because of the money being provided by the MDB Authority. NCCM refuse to listen to our concerns. They dont want to give up the "nest egg" that funds their organisation. They have basically closed the forest off to locals and tourists who once used it for recreation and wood collection. People loved camping out in the forest over the cooler months but not anymore. Also the kangaroos and</p>

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	wallabies who no longer have a forest to feed in, but use the local golf course or farm paddocks to graze on. As far as we can see all the MDBP has done is provide enormous amounts of money to destroy our once prosperous and environmental district.
21.	Questions Arising from the Interim Report - What time does the Productivity Commission consider acceptable for NSW to deliver all WRPs? - Excluding monitoring, what stakeholder and community protection mechanisms does the Productivity Commission recommend be in place to accommodate 'warranted' socio-economic impacts created by BTG and anticipated staggered buybacks? - What funding is immediately available to local Governments to plan for the Productivity Commission's intended socio-economic impacts of 'Resetting the Balance'? - What accountability framework and readjustment provisions does the Productivity Commission recommend be engaged by the Commonwealth Government to accommodate the Commission's acknowledged socio-economic impacts of previous recovery programs on stakeholders and their communities? - How is the current E01548 Tender 'value for money' guidelines avoiding significant disruption to water markets and Basin communities, given the recognised shortfall of future recovery funding?
22.	<p>Supply measures won't be delivered</p> <p>Constraints will take 10 years plus and need a different mechanism</p> <p>450 GL will be hard and a separate Cth commercial entity should be established that is nimble and go directly into the market</p> <p>There's not enough money left to deliver the basin plan (contains useful \$ figures)</p> <p>Cth should take greater responsibility for implementation.</p> <p>Greater work required with First Nations to meet commitments.</p>
23.	Cotton Australia is the peak body representing Australia's 1,500 cotton producers, many of whom operate within the Murray-Darling Basin. Cotton Australia is an active member of the National Irrigators Council and the New South Wales Irrigators Council, and it has reviewed the submissions of these organisations and endorses them. Due to time constraints Cotton Australia will not be making a full submission to the interim report.