

Speak Up Campaign Inc.

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Xavier Martin
NSW Farmers Association
Water Taskforce
c/o [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

July 27, 2020

Dear Xavier and the NSWFA Water Taskforce,

On behalf of the Speak Up Campaign I am briefly touching base to commend the efforts of NSWFA in relation to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. We acknowledge it is not an easy policy area and as such your efforts in this space to address the grassroots concerns of negative impacts of water reform / policy are welcome.

We are contacting you also to ensure NSWFA are acutely aware of Speak Up's position on the Barmah Choke, as we believe there are reports /reviews underway to address deliverability issues.

Negative environmental impacts from forcing unrealistic volumes of water down the Murray are also impacting the Edward and Wakool system, along with the Goulburn system. These impacts include –

- River bank erosion and slumping across wide sections of river in many systems
- Destruction of critical breeding ground / nests for the Azure Kingfisher, the Murray Cray and Cod, along with numerous other species
- Increased sedimentation, also impacting on native aquatic species and increasing the deposition of nutrients into the water way

There is a strong view within our region that engineering solutions should not be the preferred method of resolving deliverability issues, and we are sure your members would support this stand. We are concerned that the MDBA will try to convince the Federal Government that this is the easiest and most cost efficient way to solve this problem, however it would do nothing to resolve issues around environmental degradation in other sections of the river. Additionally, in doing so it will increase the capacity to trade more water downstream resulting in more water leaving the NSW Murray and Victorian regions above the choke, as a result decreasing production and decimating communities further in these regions.

Engineering solutions to the Barmah Choke are band-aid solutions that fail to address the real problems –

- Unregulated downstream expansion
- Maintaining the Lower Lakes as an entirely freshwater system supplied by the Murray
- Unrealistic demands on the Southern Connected System when the Darling is offline
- Flood Plain Harvesting compliance, metering, monitoring and licencing

Sincere Thanks,
Shelley Scoullar
Speak Up Campaign Chair
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