



SUBMISSION 21
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GREATER
SHEPPARTON

24 August 2017

Mr Josh Bull MP
Chair Victorian Parliament's Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development
Committee
Inquiry into the Management, Governance and Use of Environmental Water
Parliament House
Spring St
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Mr Bull

**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT, GOVERNANCE AND
USE OF ENVIRONMENTAL WATER**

This submission is supplied on behalf of Greater Shepparton City Council (GSCC). GSCC, and in particular the towns of Shepparton and Mooroopna, lie at the confluence of the Goulburn and Broken Rivers and Seven Creeks. It is the view of the Council that the severity of black-water events has increased over recent years. In preparing this submission Council has conferred with GBCMA and utilised their submission and expertise in river management to assist in the preparation of this submission.

There is a need to determine what may be able to be done to ensure the severity of the environmental impact of these events is lessened into the future.

- 1. the assessment of the role of environmental water management in preventing or causing 'blackwater' events;*

Blackwater events along the region's rivers tend to occur because of unseasonal flood events or high rainfall events that wash large volumes of organic material into waterways. To assist in lessening the impact of such events it may be necessary to ensure river water is diluted with other sources to help lessen the impact of the blackwater. In the latest event along the Goulburn River the water moved down the river with significant impact on native fish populations. If the water could be diluted with water from environmental flows and/or irrigation channels it may assist the native fauna to find 'fresh sources' of water that may provide a potentially safe haven for them. It is noted that the GBCMA submission identifies that using environmental flows in larger systems like the Goulburn is not feasible due to the flows that would be required to dilute large blackwater events.

- 2. how environmental water and environmental water managers interact with, and utilise, management tools such as carryover and whether the carryover of environmental water impacts on the availability of water for irrigators;*

Council assumes that Environmental Water Holders utilise the carryover tool to the best advantage for the use of environmental water in providing optimum benefits for

the environment. We are not aware of any issues that the carryover of environmental water may have on private irrigators.

3. *consideration of what barriers exist to the more efficient use of environmental water and how these may be addressed;*

Council's response to this item relies on the response that Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority has provided. The Council understands the need and supports the provision of environmental water to assist in improved environmental outcomes along our river systems. This could be improved by;

- funding of works to allow delivery of environmental water to more wetlands, floodplains and rivers,
- addressing constraints on delivery of higher in channel and overbank environmental flows,
- addressing constraints on environmental flows during and outside of the irrigation season,
- better forecasting of river inflows to improve use of unregulated flows to meet environmental flow targets,
- funding of long term monitoring programs,
- implementation of technical investigations to address knowledge gaps in environmental management objectives and targets, and
- complementary projects to protect and improve wetlands, rivers and floodplains.

4. *assessment of fees and charges applied to environmental water and whether these differ from those imposed on other water users.*

Council understands that DELWP has recently prepared a discussion paper on environmental water charges that had input from key organisations. Council would refer the Inquiry to that discussion paper on this matter.

Council appreciates the opportunity to make this submission and requests that if there are any questions relating to the submission that contact be made with Greg McKenzie Manager Environment [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Peter Harriott
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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