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**From:** Inquiry into the Management, Governance and Use of Environmental Water  
**Sent:** Friday, 25 August 2017 3:22 PM  
**To:** ENRRDC  
**Subject:** New Submission to Inquiry into the Management, Governance and Use of Environmental Water

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Management, Governance and Use of Environmental Water

Mr Chris Bromley  
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**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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Chris Bromley  
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ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the Management, Governance and Use of Environmental Water

I wish to make specific reference to

Term of Reference 3

“consideration of what barriers exist to the more efficient use of environmental water and how these may be addressed” and the bulk of my comments will be made with specific reference to the Coliban River.

I live in Malmesbury and, as a member of the Malmesbury and District Landcare Group, have been actively involved, in collaboration with the North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA), with the environmental restoration of the Coliban River, downstream of the Malmesbury Reservoir, for over 10 years.

In considering the “efficient use of environmental water”, I submit that the timing of environmental flows is at least, if not more, important, than the actual amount of water being released. It is essential that these releases be made at times that will maximise the advantages to native species, particularly in relation to their breeding cycles.

Historically, the Coliban, (as with all rivers that have been dammed for the provision of Domestic and Irrigation supply purposes), have flooded in winter and, generally, slowed, or even ceased flowing, during the summer months. The breeding cycles of native fish, birds and particularly platypus have evolved to fit in with this cycle. With the construction of dams of course, this natural cycle has been reversed. Flow is stored in the winter filling season, and released in summer.

For many years, the Coliban River has been provided with a daily passing flow, via releases from the Malmsbury Reservoir, of 3-5megl per day, with an occasional “flush” of up to 25megl per day for a short period, generally in March. In 2007, the NCCMA undertook major willow removal from this stretch of the River. There have also been 2 significant flood events during this period. The consequences of the “monoflow” have been observable. Following the willow removal the bed of the River was clearly established. In recent years however, in the absence of a regular (and well timed) “flush” to move sediment, the river bed has been recolonised, and blocked, by rushes and willow regrowth. As a Landcare Group, we can address the willows, but the build-up of sediment is beyond our power to remove. It can only be washed away by significant water flow.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the timing of Environmental releases to the Coliban River below the Malmsbury Reservoir be such that it duplicates to an extent the natural flows of the River that have occurred for thousands of years, and which are essential for cycles of native species. For example, studies have established that a significant flush in August / early September provides the trigger for Platypus breeding, but the same significant flush in November / December will in fact flood the nests and drown the pups.
2. That Coliban Water be funded to install an effective water release system to enable the better management of these flows, in consultation with the NCCMA. For example, as the natural cycle of the River meant it often stopped flowing in the Summer Months, the flow could be minimised or even stopped for a period of days or weeks to enable the environmental entitlement to be stored up for a significant release, planned to maximise the environmental benefit. I have had some discussions with Coliban Water Staff and they inform me that this is very difficult with current equipment.

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File1:

File2:

File3: