

# Speak Up Campaign Inc.

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July 27, 2020

Dear Fiona and Tony,

On behalf of the Speak Up Campaign I am briefly touching base to commend the efforts of NFF on your recent policy announcements in relation to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

We have recently become aware of the NFF's Economic Recovery Policy Document and were pleased to see referencing to Fix the Basin Plan. We fully agree that addressing water waste and mismanagement is a simple step in immediately bolstering regional economies, with flow on benefits to our cities.

Speak Up acknowledge your present efforts around water reform. This is not an easy policy area and as such we commend the efforts of NFF in this space.

There is one area where we would like to seek clarification on item 6.3 of the policy paper -

*6.3 Urgently address deliverability issues and third party effects: Deliverability issues and third party effects associated with changing patterns of water use and subsequent demand downstream of the Barmah Choke remains a priority concern for the NFF. Current reviews considering this issue must be conducted transparently, and governments must move quickly once findings are released.*

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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