



18 September 2020

The Director
Murray-Darling Basin Inquiry
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
GPO Box 3131
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam,

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN WATER MARKETS INQUIRY - INTERIM REPORT - SUBMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry - interim report.

Griffith City Council supports the summation of the interim report for the continuation of water trading, including the maximisation of economic performance of irrigated agriculture, relying on fair and efficient water markets, underpinned by an environmentally healthy river system. Water trading, however, is not performing to these standards and reform is required. The market is complex and governance failure has created distrust amongst water users.

- Reform of the governance framework under which water trading operates is a corner stone to address:
 1. Potential conflicts of interest involving water brokers and water-exchange brokers.
 2. Manipulation of the market by entities which exploit very limited regulation.
 3. Lack of transparency of the water market which benefits better resourced and professional traders.
- Regulatory reform to allow water trading between water consumers only.
- Improve communication of water allocation policies, river operations policy and real time data to irrigators.
- Rationalise/consolidate the number of government and regulatory bodies which oversee water policy. Remove duplication or overlapping in decision making.
- The topic of water "carry-over" has been a divisive issue amongst some irrigators. Greater transparency of how carry-over operates is required.

Yours sincerely,

BRETT STONESTREET
GENERAL MANAGER

cc: Griffith City Council Councillors and Senior Management Team