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25 January 2012

**Executive Officer  
Natural Resources Committee  
Parliament of South Australia  
GPO Box 572  
ADELAIDE SA 5001**

Email: [patrick.dupont@parliament.sa.gov.au](mailto:patrick.dupont@parliament.sa.gov.au)

Dear Mr Dupont

**Re: Submission to Parliament of South Australia, Natural Resources Committee, Inquiry into Draft Murray Darling Basin Plan**

On behalf of the Alexandrina Council and community, I offer a submission to the Inquiry into Draft Murray Darling Basin Plan by the Natural Resources Committee.

Background

The community of Alexandrina Council are proud to live in an iconic area of South Australia on the Fleurieu Peninsula, encompassing the River Murray, Coorong and Lower Lakes extending from the north-western side of Lake Alexandrina to the Murray Mouth.

The Alexandrina Council and community acknowledges the Ngarrindjeri People's ongoing connection to the land and waters within its area under the "Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan" Agreement.

The River Murray, Coorong and Lower Lakes form the cultural, economic and social fabric of Alexandrina Council. They are inseparable from our way of life.

Council since its inception has been focused on water conservation measures and the health of the River Murray. We are custodians of the catchment that contributes the most tributaries feeding the Lower Lakes and our community has contributed strongly to the efficient management of the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges Prescribed Water Resources Area.

In 2008 when water levels in the Lower Lakes reached record lows, Alexandrina Council adopted a "Securing A Fresh Water Future" strategy to encapsulate all of it's water saving initiatives and assist with community education and promotion of it's programs.

Council's initiatives have included effluent & stormwater reuse, water sensitive urban design, various government and non-government initiatives, community education programs and events, water saving initiatives in Council buildings and open space irrigation policies.

Council and the community are striving to utilise water in the best possible and most sustainable manner and act as an ambassador for our magnificent river system to ensure our children inherit a river and lakes environment that is recognised as an Australian icon for generations to come.

Alexandrina Council commits to work for the good of all that rely on a healthy, working river. We must put aside State boundaries and small-town thinking. We have to think big and think collectively.

In the Murray Darling Basin of the future, what is good for one community, individual or environment must be good for us all. If the Murray Mouth is closed for any length of time we know we are all in trouble – the Murray Mouth is the canary in the coalmine for the entire Basin.

#### "Move All Salt to Sea" Campaign

Continuing our long-standing history as an advocate for the River Murray, Coorong and Lower Lakes, I have in the past year spearheaded a campaign entitled "Move All Salt to the Sea" which forms the basis of our submission to the Inquiry.

Under the "Move All Salt to the Sea" campaign, Alexandrina Council identifies three pillars indispensable to a healthy, working Murray Darling Basin:

- Pillar 1: there is just one way out – the Murray Mouth – and it needs to be open for nine out of every 10 years.
- Pillar 2: all salt – right back to Queensland – must be moved out to sea. If 2 million tonnes are not moved on, the system will choke from the Murray Mouth up with rising salinity and degraded land.
- Pillar 3: the Federal Government must set and ensure compliance with targets to achieve a healthy, working river.

Despite all current salt interception measures, the Murray-Darling Basin accumulates 2 million tonnes of salt in its river system each year. There is only one way out for this enormous quantity of salt – the Murray Mouth – and we have to move all this salt out to the sea.

Adopting the Three Pillars will enable equity and an assured future for all who rely on the Basin's healthy, working waterways. Anything less will choke the communities, livelihoods and biodiversity that rely on a healthy, working river.

#### Alexandrina community

Alexandrina Council respectfully acknowledges and supports the input of Ngarrindjeri elders in the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) Basin Plan process as articulated by Tom Trevorrow:

*"Our traditional management plan was: don't be greedy, don't take any more than you need and respect everything around you. That's the management plan — it's such a simple management plan, but so hard for people to carry out."*

Tom Trevorrow (2010) Murrundi Ruwe Pangari Ringbalin "River Country Spirit Ceremony: Aboriginal Perspectives on River Country" as referenced in "A Yarn on the River: Getting Aboriginal Voices into the Basin Plan, p.3".

Alexandrina Council also acknowledges the interests of our Lower Lake region, particularly remediation of Lake Albert and the Coorong. We support much of the 5 point plan of "local action" recommended by Region 6 of the Murray Darling Association to:

- 1) Remove the Causeway;
- 2) Remove the Bund in total;
- 3) Dredge the Narrung Narrows;
- 4) A channel and/or a pipeline at the southern end of Lake Albert to the Coorong [pending further environmental impact study]; and
- 5) Return natural flows to the southern end of the Coorong.

Examples of messages of support for the "Move All Salt to the Sea" campaign from our community posted online at My Say Alexandrina consultation website include:

*"Ensure our efforts are focused on the bigger picture...Go Council...you have my Support."* Billy

*"The salt from the system must be flushed out to sea. Healthy communities, environment and economies depend on it."* Karyn from Milang

(<http://mysay.alexandrina.sa.gov.au/movesalttothesea>)

Our community is also embarking on a year of cultural events thanks to the generosity of the State Government and its Regional Centre of Culture Program. Our theme for 2012 borrows from the revival experienced by the Coorong, Lower Lakes and River communities following the return to "river flows" since the devastating drought of the recent past.... *"Just Add Water"* is all about a community that can nourish creativity, wellbeing and renewal.

A well-developed Murray-Darling Basin Plan that demonstrates equity for communities who have worked hard to respect the system and recognises the national importance of the Lower Lakes would be highly regarded by our community at a time when they are currently showing signs of healing from the impacts of drought and seeing the return of river-based industries.

Draft Murray-Darling Basin Plan, released for consultation November 2011

Alexandrina Council is currently preparing a formal submission to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority on the Draft Murray-Darling Basin Plan. While our full submission is not yet available, key issues are emerging.

Alexandrina Council:

- recognises that the Lower Lakes would always benefit from higher levels of environmental flows than what a further recovery of 2750GL/y would deliver, however what is counted towards this calculation and how it is measured, enforced and reviewed is just as relevant to the Draft Plan;
- supports the proposed principle that the Murray Mouth remain open 9 out of every 10 years but notes how 'open' is defined and achieved is of significant interest;
- is likely to seek further enhancements in the Draft Plan to monitoring and measurement capability noting there are not yet enough measuring points in Lower Lakes to properly implement and inform the Plan;
- is likely to seek clarification in the Draft Plan about the consequences of Basin monitoring to a major review of SDLs at 2015 and implementation of SDLs in 2019;

- notes community concern about recognition of salinity levels and lake heights and whether this is sufficiently recognised in the Draft Plan;
- will advocate that infrastructure and funding towards 'adjustment' for river communities anticipated to be 'affected' by SDLs should also include the Lower Lakes and recognition that projects or programs relevant to our resilience and rejuvenation may differ to those communities upstream;
- will continue building our community's ecological, social and economic capacity and resilience in the event of further impacts should the Plan *not* achieve its outcomes; and
- strongly supports "localism" approaches to Plan implementation and Basin management and consider our community experienced, ready and willing to take up this opportunity.

Further, the cornerstone of the success of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is that the Australian Government provide whole-of-catchment management and leadership over the *long-term*, in the *national* interest.

Alexandrina Council works alongside all councils, interest groups and water users throughout the Basin and looks forward to doing what is in the best interests of future generations of our community.

We respectfully welcome the extensive consultation undertaken by the State Government in relation to the Draft Plan and I also extend my thanks to this Committee of Parliament for your close attention to the development of Murray-Darling Basin Plan in the interests of South Australia.

Yours sincerely



**Kym McHugh**  
Mayor

Mobile: 0419 817 134  
Email: [kym.mchugh@alexandrina.sa.gov.au](mailto:kym.mchugh@alexandrina.sa.gov.au)

CC: Hon Paul Caica MP, Minister for Water and the River Murray; Jaimie Briggs MP, Federal Member for Mayo; Adrian Pederick MP, Member for Hammond; Michael Pengilly MP, Member for Finnis; Alexandrina Council Elected Members.



A year long arts and cultural program that embraces arts and cultural programs, facilities and community partnerships and encourages participation in arts activities ensuring that Alexandrina continues to be a supportive and creative place to live, visit and work in.

For more details visit [www.artsalexandrina.org.au](http://www.artsalexandrina.org.au)