



Australian National Sportfishing Association Ltd

ACN 063 293 514

COMMITTED TO CONSERVATION & INTEGRITY IN SPORTFISHING SINCE 1967

2 August 2017

The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister of Australia
PO Box 6022 Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Board and members of ANSA - Australian National Sportfishing Association Ltd I am writing to express our dismay and grave concern with the recent report on the ABC Four Corners Programme concerning alleged water theft, corruption and mismanagement of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

The allegations relating to criminal activity including water theft on a massive scale, construction of illegal culverts, dams and road works on Crown Lands and deliberate tampering with water meters and the downgrading of compliance operations are disturbing to say the least and need to be thoroughly investigated.

The fact that the conduct reported by Four Corners has occurred in spite of adverse reports by the NSW Ombudsman, ICAC and an independent consultant, clearly highlights the need for a fully independent and robust National inquiry to urgently to sort out and remedy obvious administrative and regulatory deficiencies within the MDB Authority its State and commercial administrative agencies and to restore public confidence in the management of water resources across the MDB.

While ANSA welcomes the decision by the Australian Government to have the MDB Authority carry out a basin wide compliance probe and also the decision NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Water, Trade and Industries to appoint Ken Matthews to conduct an independent investigation it is the belief of ANSA and its members that the interest of the MDB, the public and all stakeholders would be best served by a National Judicial Inquiry to be conducted in conjunction with these investigations.

By way of background ANSA is one of Australia's oldest and largest recreational fishing peak body networks. ANSA has been operational since 1967 and has a national membership base of some 5000 and an extensive network of ANSA affiliate clubs in every State and Territory. ANSA is a foundation member of the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation, the National peak body for all recreational fishers and several of our member occupy positions on a variety of National and State Government boards and committees established to advise and manage our fisheries.

Many of our members are freshwater sportsfishers and the misallocation of water intended for environmental flows under the MDB Plan is seen as a betrayal of the Government's commitment to rehabilitate and protect our inland waterways and the marine / fish habitat ecosystem especially in those South Eastern states totally reliant on water flows from the Murray Darling.

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If the general public, including recreational fishers is to have any confidence in the integrity and capability of the MDB Plan, the MDB Authority and the various Commonwealth and State government agencies tasked with responsibility for administration of the MDB, it is essential that an overarching National Inquiry be commissioned by the Australian government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Burgess', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

John Burgess
Executive Officer/ Director
ANSA – Australian National Sportfishing Association Ltd

CC

The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

The Hon Tony Burke MP
Shadow Minister for Environment and Water

The Hon Niall Blair MLC
NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Water, Trade and Industries

The Hon Luke Foley MP
Leader of the NSW Opposition