



22 January 2010

The General Manager
SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board,
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Dear Jack,

Re: Annual Review of the SA Murray-Darling Basin Business Plan

As a Peak Body under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*, Conservation Council SA (Conservation SA) is pleased to make comment on these proposed amendments to the business plan of the SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Plan.

The Board is to be commended on the provision of clear and straightforward information to the community about the current review of the Business Plan. The Board has been clear about the proposed amendments, the importance of the community in achieving NRM goals for the region and has clearly articulated the feedback it is seeking from the community. The Board has also provided a number of information sessions across the region, the opportunity for community members to phone in for information and a clear and comprehensive on-line feedback form.

In the future, it would be worthwhile expanding the Proposed Amendment Fact Sheet to include a rationale for those changes. Although it is appreciated that the Regional NRM Plan was only adopted in April 2009, such information would assist in demonstrating to the community that the Business Plan also serves as an adaptive management tool as well as an engagement tool and is a demonstration of the Board's learning and of the continuous improvement sought.

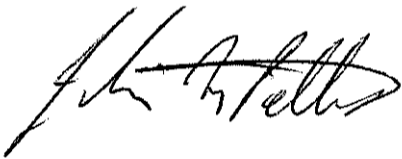
Further, there is a unique opportunity in the executive summary of the Business Plan to summarise what has been achieved in the region, what the Board has learnt over the past year and how that will be reflected in changes over the next year. This would help community to reconnect with the Board and its plan for the upcoming year. This would demonstrate that the Board is responsive and that the Plan is community-driven and the aim is for continual improvement. It would also serve to bring warmth and heart to the document and hence to the regional plan. Also, it may be useful to include some short case studies and quotes from community members, which would help partnerships in action.

In order to obtain meaningful comment and the all-important 'buy-in' from the community early involvement is crucial. Therefore it may be more beneficial putting more effort into involving the community when the Board is reviewing its Business plan as opposed to only seeking community feedback on the proposed amendments. The on-going challenge is to make such opportunities as meaningful as possible.

In terms of funding if future funding sources are uncertain it is useful to demonstrate how resources will be prioritised. Such a list of criteria demonstrates to the community how priorities are determined. Also, if the Board has deliberate funding strategies for different streams it would be useful to articulate its rationale to ensure public transparency." Further, it is recommended that greater input and added value could have been obtained into this annual review process through an Adelaide-based meeting for a range of stakeholders and potential investors. These could have included representatives from agencies, peak bodies, Presiding Members, potential investors and delivery partners.

Finally, Conservation SA appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Annual Review of the SA MDB NRM Board Business Plan and trusts these comments will be duly considered.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Pettett', written in a cursive style.

Julie Pettett

CEO