

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION of UNIVERSITY WOMEN INC.

President
Dr. Daphne Elliott
Ph. (08) 8388 5778

CIR (International Relations)
Ms. Kathryn Seymour
Ph. (08) 8388 0291

Secretary
Mrs. Patricia Burgess
Ph. (08) 8250 8049

Treasurer
Ms. Lois Gibson
Ph. (08) 8297 7821



TML

MDBC FA 0533

Corr. Id. 19425
Mail Box 28

University of Adelaide
Adelaide SA 5005
Ph/Fax: (08) 8303 4945

Email: afuw@mulga.adelaide.edu.au
Internet: www.adelaide.edu.au/AFUW/

Mr. D.J. Blackmore,
Chief Executive
The Murray-Darling Commission,
GPO Box 409
CANBERRA ACT 2601



13 July 2000

Dear Mr. Blackmore,

Re: The Draft Overview Report of the Operation of the Cap
(Your reference MDBC:31:GMA)

Thank you for your letter and enclosed material of 27th June to Barbara Williams, Convener of the Federation's Standing Committee on the Environment. The Australian Federation of University Women Inc. (AFUW) at its 31st Triennial Conference in April expressed its concern at the potential dangers to both land and the community of further deterioration in the condition of this great river system.

We have read with interest the draft Report of the Overview of the Cap and commend the Commission on its achievements so far.

As the deadline for submissions on the draft Report is so close the Association does not have time to respond in detail to specific issues addressed in it. We would however like to make the following points.

- The Murray-Darling Basin is the source of much of the country's agricultural production. It is imperative that further depletion of the waters running through its length does not occur. Therefore the definitions that are presently in dispute must be made clear and unambiguous so there can be no misunderstanding or misreading of their intent
- Adelaide depends heavily on waters from the Murray-Darling for its existence, situated as it is in the country's most arid state. It is essential to maintain this supply if South Australia is to continue to prosper.

- Further desertification of the land is unacceptable. All measures possible must be taken to ensure we are not responsible for this event no matter what the financial cost. Increasing loss of agricultural land will ultimately affect the rural community far more than any commercially driven short-term solutions.
- The spread of high water requirement crops into lower rainfall areas must come at a cost to the conservation of our valuable inland waterways, aquatic ecosystems and water supplies and should be curtailed before the spread reaches into marginal rainfall areas.

AFUW is committed by Resolution 9 of the 31st Triennial Conference to urge all governments concerned to cooperate in addressing the problems of the Murray-Darling Basin. It will continue to pursue this Resolution for as long as there is a need.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft report. We look forward to reading the final report in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Daphne Elliott
President