

# SUBMISSION ON DRAFT REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE BASIN


I believe that the Panel has produced a thoughtful and comprehensive draft Report.

I attended a consultation session in Shepparton and had conversations with colleagues who had participated in sessions in other localities. I was concerned that the sad stories of hardship and despair which were so prevalent at those events may have dominated the Panel's draft report. I am pleased that, while those circumstance has been well noted and documented, the Panel has acknowledged that there are positives and that many water users and communities who have embraced new technology, irrigation modernisation, water trading and carryover are forging ahead.

My disappointment with the draft is that it is ambivalent in regards to the 450 GL of up water. If one thing is abundantly clear from the consultation process, it is that achieving that volume by water buybacks is simply untenable and unacceptable and achieving it by efficiency gains and in stream infrastructure is mightily expensive. Moreover, it would likely mean further damage to the environment and additional encroachment on private farm land.

I believe that the Final Report should bite the bullet and say that the 450GL was a political fix in the circumstances of the time and the fullness of time has demonstrated that it is unachievable in practical terms and should be dumped.

The overwhelming relief that would provide throughout the Basin would do much to relieve the distress and distrust that the Panel has so correctly identified and documented.



5 April 2020