Socio-Economic Assessment of Murray-Darling Basin Submission Template

1. What organisation (if relevant) are you from?

   ██

2. Please enter your first name

   ██

3. Please enter your email

   ████████████

Bring communities back to the heart of conversations and action that decide their future

This section encompasses the following categories:
➢ Governments must rebuild community trust in water reform, and lead from the front
➢ Current funding is not enough to support community led transitions for Basin communities impacted by water reform
➢ Socioeconomic neutrality criteria should be accompanied by a process to provide flexibility for communities to move to less water dependent futures where communities request this

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Panel's key findings and recommendations, and why? Please provide as much detail as possible.
   Recommendation 1 fails to emphasise the bipartisan agreements made in regard to the Basin Plan and for the need for all jurisdictions to honour these agreements. Support for regional communities with properly targeted and efficient investment programs to assist in diversification and less reliance on water dependent industries is supported. No compensation or 'off-set' funding to private individuals or corporations should be considered

5. Are there any significant gaps? What are we missing?
   Clear analysis of the most efficient way to recover the agreed volumes of water in the Basin Plan and the best way to build regional community resilience. There is a failure to recognise the socio-economic benefits of ecosystem services provided by a healthy river system

6. If implemented, do you think our recommendations would make a difference or have a benefit to you and/or your community?
   Difficult to tell because the recommendations are very high level

Meet the pressing needs of First Nations

This section encompasses the following categories:
➢ More needs to be done to improve social, cultural and economic outcomes for First Nations communities

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Panel's key findings and recommendations, and why? Please provide as much detail as possible.
   Agree with these recommendations. The issue of valuing ecosystem services should be beyond culturally important sites, but include an analysis of all ecosystem function including the value of good water quality.

8. Are there any significant gaps? What are we missing?

9. If implemented, do you think our recommendations would make a difference or have a benefit to you and/or your community?
   If these recommendations are supported by First Nations groups then they will make a difference

Implement water reform with greater care so potential harms are minimised

This section encompasses the following categories:
- From this point on, governments should match the pace of all further water recovery to the capacity of systems and communities to absord and adjust change
- Basin communities need greater clarity around river operations
- The quality, timeliness and awareness of indicators related to wellbeing and the environment need to be better
- Research and innovation need more focus on helping farm businesses transition to flexible farming systems
- Moving towards more sustainable irrigation infrastructure

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Panel's key findings and recommendations, and why? Please provide as much detail as possible.
    We strongly disagree with Rec 2 - water recovery has been at a standstill during the drought and is now needed to assist collapsing ecosystems. There should be no further delays. There are other constraints besides the Barmah Choke. We agree that fixing constraints on water delivery must be given high priority. Tracking of investment for regional economic purposes should be included in Rec 14 There is no support for off-farm infrastructure projects.

11. Are there any significant gaps? What are we missing?
    There is no consideration of the ongoing harm to ecosystems and river health and the cost to communities. The failure to analyse the value of ecosystem sevices is a failing of the Draft report

12. If implemented, do you think our recommendations would make a difference or have a benefit to you and/or your community?
    Delaying water recovery will not assist communities in the Lower Darling or lower Murray

Support the capacity of communities to adapt to change

This section encompasses the following categories:
- Basin communities need greater clarity around river operations
- The quality, timeliness and awareness of indicators related to wellbeing and the environment need to be better
- The Australia Government needs to further invest in regional connectivity in the Basin

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Panel's key findings and recommendations, and why? Please provide as much detail as possible.
    Better management of water security for towns is essential for the long-term. This should not be based on seeking additional water sources but on more efficient water allocation in regulated river systems and more efficient use within urban areas. We support improved funding for front line services and digital connectivity for remote rural and regional communities. This regional development approach should be separated out from Basin Plan considerations.

14. Are there any significant gaps? What are we missing?
    The issue of water quality and costs to communities has not been considered. The Basin Plan salinity target has not been included in the assessment.
15. If implemented, do you think our recommendations would make a difference or have a benefit to you and/or your community?
    The recommendations to improve funding for services will enhance local economies more than investment in infrastructure to recover water.

Address critical and urgent gaps in wellbeing, infrastructure and services

This section encompasses the following categories:

➢ The Australian Government needs to further invest in regional connectivity in the Basin
➢ Basin regions and towns facing acute social and economic issues needs immediate support

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Panel's key findings and recommendations, and why? Please provide as much detail as possible.
    Generally support
17. Are there any significant gaps? What are we missing?
18. If implemented, do you think our recommendations would make a difference or have a benefit to you and/or your community?