

29 October 2009

Contact: Alexandra Anthony
Phone: 0428 613 291
Email: saant@bigpond.com
Doc ID: A286607
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Dr John Williams
Commissioner
Natural Resources Commission
GPO Box 4206
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear John

RE: Riverina Bioregion Regional Forest Preliminary Assessment - River red gum and woodland forests

Thankyou for providing the opportunity to submit comments in relation to the Preliminary Assessment. In reviewing the Assessment it became evident that the NRC has done an exceptional job in collating a vast amount of information and data in a very short space of time. The Murray CMA Board and staff have had very positive feedback from our community and stakeholders regarding both the extent and quality of your consultation, particularly in light of the tight timeframes specified in the Terms of Reference.

Our comments in response to the Preliminary Assessment include:

- 2.2 - Institutional Arrangements (page 20) – There is no reference to the CMA's whose dedicated role is the regional delivery of NRM on public and private land outside the State Forests and National Parks.
- 2.2 (page 20) paragraph 2 – There is no mention of the important regulated waterway the Yanco Creek which runs from the Murrumbidgee River then into the Billabong Creek and ultimately the Edward River thereby linking the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers in a NE to SW corridor.
- The Millewa group of Forests appear to be in the best condition and therefore exhibit the most resilience and ability to cope with disturbance.
- The process of thinning can be used as a valuable tool to assist forests to maintain resilience.
- The ability to "piggy-back" environmental flows on water released for SA via the Edward River provides opportunity for the allocation and use of environmental water into forests along the Edward River, particularly the Werai Forest referred to on page 180 as being in poor condition and the most likely to disappear. The current drought and lack of watering events has obviously contributed substantially to its current state
- The watering regime would be best managed by a collaborative effort and should look at all sources including water held by The Living Murray (TLM), Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) and NSW government.

- It is unfortunate that the Terms of Reference restricted your study to public land only in NSW thereby limiting the accuracy of true extent. The Draft Western Riverina Vegetation Management Plan included all vegetation (both on public and private land tenure) and has the extent of River Red Gum at 110-114% larger than pre European in the NSW bioregion, presumably as a result of river regulation.
- The NSW Native Vegetation Act 2003 has prohibited the unapproved harvesting of trees on private land, thereby protecting woodlands to the standard of improve or maintain. There is no reference to the conservation of River Red Gum on private land that has resulted from the implementation of the NVA 2003.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Kind regards



Alexandra Anthony
Chair – Murray CMA Board