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Friday, 30 October 2009

Dr John Williams,  
Commissioner,  
Forests Assessment,  
Natural Resources Commission,  
GPO Box 4206,  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Dr Williams,

**NRC Meeting with RAMROC Council Mayors and General Managers 28.10.2009**

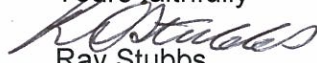
RAMROC Councils appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and other members of NRC at Deniliquin on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009, to discuss the various issues set out in the Commission's Preliminary Assessment Report.

Council representatives present were pleased to convey to NRC the key issues from their perspective, particularly the following:-

- The critical community socio-economic importance of maintaining a viable and sustainable redgum timber industry in the Murray and Riverina regions,
- The community concerns about the commitment and capacity of Governments to effectively maintain designated National Park areas in terms of optimal forest management practices, fire control, weed and pest control and tourism promotion etc;
- Local communities and timber industries have contributed greatly in the past towards the preservation of protected species and the protection of redgum forests from fire, pests and diseases;
- In view of the current water entitlements buyback programs for maintaining environmentally healthy river and forest systems, in particular the Federal Government's \$3.1 billion buyback program, there is a high likelihood that a comprehensive watering regime will be available for the forest areas in the future. This is therefore a very crucial component of the new Murray Darling Basin Plan and particularly the Environmental Watering Plan element of that overall Plan;
- If in the future the watering requirements of the redgum forest areas can be adequately met from the environmental water allocations and provided for in the Environmental Watering Plan, there may in fact be no need to terminate or amend the existing timber industry activities;
- It is critically important that New South Wales does not get locked into a permanent framework such as a National Park declaration. Any new arrangements must be flexible and capable of adapting to changing circumstances;

RAMROC commends the work already undertaken by NRC in preparing the Preliminary Assessment Report and looks forward to receiving the Final Report due at the end of November 2009

Yours faithfully

  
Ray Stubbs  
Executive Officer