



Hon Jay Weatherill MP  
Premier of South Australia

Dear GetUp Members

I am writing to you as the Premier of South Australia because it's critically important we take this once in a lifetime opportunity to restore the Murray Darling Basin's resilience and protect its health for the long term.

The MDBA has released its draft Basin Plan which proposes 2,750 GL of water per year is returned to the river system.

We are concerned about this figure because the scientific work we have done so far tells us it's not enough to achieve a healthy river environment that will survive the next drought.

South Australia takes just 7 per cent of the river's waters – 93 per cent is taken out upstream.

Our irrigators capped their take from the River in 1969. Since then, about 5,000 billion litres more has been taken out by States upstream.

That's the problem we must now address.

Rivers die from the mouth up and as the State at the end of the system, South Australia has experienced the devastating impacts of over allocation.

During the recent drought the river in our State suffered from acidification, increased salinity and riverbanks that literally dried out, cracked and gave way.

We were forced to take emergency measures to protect precious ecosystems and aquatic life and even had to contemplate supplying river towns with bottled water because the river was too salty to drink.

The South Australian experience will become that of the whole Basin unless we take this opportunity to restore it to health.

It's not a choice between producing food and having a healthy river. We need a healthy river and sustainable food production.

I urge you to support the river and do all you can to help return our nation's iconic river system to health.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jay Weatherill', written over a large, stylized circular graphic element.

Jay Weatherill  
**PREMIER**

29/11/2011