



YORTA YORTA NATION ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

ABN: 55 942 996 311 - ICN: 3279

Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation Goulburn to Murray trade rule review – Regulatory Impact Statement for DELWP

Yorta Yorta's connection to the waterways is linked by Yorta Yorta language, people and Country. The Goulburn or that body of water in Yorta Yorta language is called *Kaiela* and the Murray or that body of water is called *Dhungala*. In the context of water planning and water rules the meaning of how we the Yorta Yorta people connect to *Kaiela* and *Dhungala* is one that is cultural and one that is personal. When discussing or planning for the Goulburn to Murray Trade Rule Review consideration must be given for the way in which the Yorta Yorta view and connect to Country.

The Goulburn (Kaiela) and Murray (Dhungala) rivers hold significant cultural and spiritual values to the Yorta Yorta community since time immemorial. Managing physical system constraints such as the Goulburn and Barmah Choke cannot come at a loss to Yorta Yorta culture, identity and connection to Country.

Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation understand the Inter-Valley Trade (IVT) rules are currently being reviewed by the State Acting Minister for Water Hon Richard Wynne and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

YYNAC appreciate the opportunity to review and submit a response to the IVT Trade Rule Option proposals and share the vision with the Victorian Government to ensure Victorian waterways are healthy and well managed.

The variation in water temperatures and the high volume of flows created by IVT's are destroying the biodiversity values of our waterways and the Murray Channel which is being used to deliver this water. This is impacting the stability of our ecosystems and aquatic life. The IVT rules have created irreversible damage to important cultural heritage sites such as burials, middens, hearths, scar trees and artefacts. The effects of high-volume flows as a result of water trading and unseasonal delivery of water have exposed our ancestors who have been buried in situ for thousands of years, our midden sites and scarred trees lost forever due to cutting and collapsing of banks. The IVT continues to cause irreversible damage to our RAMSAR sites notably Barmah National Park which carries internationally significant biodiversity and other species protected under the EPBC Act (1999).

As Yorta Yorta people, we have a strong connection to our waterways as such these sites are protected under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act (2017)*. Further to add, Government

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need to be mindful of unintended consequences of these trade rules and alternative delivery methods.

YYNAC shares Environment Victoria and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authorities (GBCMA) concerns regarding the sustained high flows from the IVT delivered through the Goulburn account to support water requirements in the Murray System. The very act of flow has and can continue to have detrimental effects on First Nation's culture, stories and inherent property rights to water and land. The unseasonal flows threaten ongoing cultural values due to extended inundation and deterioration of flora and fauna used for cultural purposes ie food, fibre medicine.

Of the available options presented to YYNAC, the most appropriate option outlined by the Scientific Panel is Option 1 containing the highest ecological and cultural consideration. YYNAC would preface this by stating we still think damage will occur to our waterways and welcome the opportunity to be part of an ongoing monitoring program that will report on improvements or decline of ecological & cultural values as a result of the Minister for Water's final decision.

We are concerned and do not support about some of the options notably 2(b) with excessively large pulses or options with wider trade flexibility. YYNAC the consumptive user will still desire options with greater trading flexibility at the expense of our waterways.

YYNAC would require assistance with resources to aid remediation on any Cultural heritage sites that have been impacted upon as a result of the high-volume flows created by the IVT.

Yours sincerely,

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Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation