

MEDIA RELEASE June 28th, 2022

Water Protectors Again Sail For River Flows



River Rats Rally For Real River Reform



Wannambe on the Darling Baaka River



Police Escort into the Wentworth Wharf



The Darling Baaka Convoy at Wentworth Wharf

Even though it was not a secret, back in April 2022, quietly, almost under the radar and for the second time in two years, Australian boaties, who are concerned about industrial scale water extraction from our inland rivers, have hit the decks-a-running and taken to the waves for *The 2nd Darling/Baaka River Convoy*.

The Darling/Baaka River Convoy is part of a national public education push to inform all peoples about what is being done to Australia's rivers, lakes, wetlands and marshes through unsustainable water-sharing plans, and wild ungoverned water-trading practices.

As in the first Convoy, the second attracted participants from Brisbane, Cairns, Melbourne, Sydney, Echuca, the Victorian Mallee and the Central and Mid North Coast of NSW. We were also joined by local supporters from Broken Hill, Menindee, Pooncarie and Wentworth.

Recent high-water flows and mud-laden banks created problems in accessing the river in Menindee, so, the Convoy travelled south by road and put the boats into the Darling/Baaka River at Pooncarie and then travelled 240 kilometres to Wentworth, where the Darling Baaka flows into the Murray River. We were met by indigenous leaders, and the The NSW Water Police escorted the convoy the final leg into Wentworth's main wharf.

Participants in the Darling/Baaka Convoy are optimistic that the new federal government will implement their election promise and create a Federal ICAC (FICAC) or Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). Through this, many suspect deals in water and irrigation licensing can be illuminated. Therefore, justice may be forthcoming, for the ecosystems biodiversity, wetlands, and the people of the Darling/Baaka River.

It is hoped, those who have plundered and spoiled one of Australia's most important river catchments can be reckoned with and under the guidance of the new Federal Water Minister, a sustainable, sensitive and fair program of water management may yet be realised for Australia.

Many people in the Western Sector of NSW have wanted a Federal Royal Commission into the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan (MDBP) and the effects of water-trading on the bio-region and its smaller towns and communities. But it seems the FICAC or ACC would be acting as a standing Royal Commission, able to compel witnesses to testify, and therefore, able to access the truth, about so many millions and billions of dollars, that seem to have vanished through the MDBP over the past decades with minimal to no positive outcomes for the Riverine Habitat.

There are plans for future River Convoys traveling from Bourke, Louth or Tilpa, to Menindee, if the water is flowing.



WATER FOR RIVERS

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With seven boats finishing the 2nd Darling/Baaka River Convoy on May 1st, a call of “MAY-DAY for our rivers” was proclaimed from the riverbank to end the event – written and spoken by [REDACTED] :

“It seems incredible that in 2022 when we have so much water in our rivers that we need to call out a MayDay distress call for our Darling Baaka. This river is a national treasure, full of historical, cultural and natural wild beauty. A place that deserves our attention. She is the second largest river in Australia and provides up to 40% of the Murray Rivers water in its lower sections.

This river needs water in her to be called a river and that water should be moving. The Darling Baaka River needs low, medium and high flows to keep her alive. Her ecological values and her importance to our continent is intrinsic to our survival. Water is our life support system not a commodity and if we cannot separate the two we as a nation of people have little hope. People and our environment are more important than profit. We cannot eat money.

Let us have some Understanding and respect for country and know that We rely on rivers and that rivers rely on us for our guardianship. This attitude is a sign of a healthy intelligent nation.. Rivers are not ours to own, to buy, to sell. We share the rivers and wetlands with animals, plants and all living things. Rivers have spirit, stories, folklore, dreaming, myths, patterns and rivers breathe and flow when they are healthy and we pay homage to that lore.

This river may have water flowing in her, but the quality of the water is not good enough. Pollution from upstream and chemical use leads us to cry for change in farming practices. Upstream water traders and agents make huge profits at the expense of downstream, where farmers must make do with the tail ends of disaster. We all deserve water we can drink, water we can swim in, water we can eat the fish from.

Mismanagement, Greed and corruption reign and we are disgusted at what large companies are getting away with and how they constantly demonstrate that they could not care less. We want a complete guardianship. A management system that will feed the future generations. Climate change is not accounted for in the plan? Why? We must look far into our future. So this convoy is to speak for our river, our mighty darling Baaka River who is being raped and pillaged by successive governments and authorities over so many years. Nature has answered the call but our government continues to do nothing. We are witnessing acts that are completely incompatible with a civilised society. When will we learn that we cannot extract more water from a system than it has the capacity to give.

We say our rivers, our responsibility, our country.

We say:

- *Rip up all water trading contracts to all international entities. Default on the deals and pay the price in order to get back our national asset. Stop water trading and internal transfers.*
- *Connect water back to land and no more water trading to agents of large foreign owned monoculture hedge funds that profit from selling our water with not a care for our country.*
- *We demand a public Register of all water traders.*
- *Royal commission into our water management. Stall the plan to do this if need be.*
- *Wherever there is a weir, put in a fish ladder that works and boat ramps above and below weirs to enhance connectivity and navigability.*
- *More environmental flows, more environmental flows and more environmental flows. Obtain this from the northern basin and allow our rivers and wetlands to live.*
- *Listen to each community along the waterways and act on their knowledge we need More consultation and participation of cultural practices.*
- *Recognise that the first fleet of ships in Australia were not Captain Cooks, but our very own First Nations people who had master shipwrights that have made thousands and thousands of boats on every river and waterway of Australia.*

*Let us Enjoy what is already here, let's keep things simple. Let's stop greed and corruption from killing everything. Each person can and must take personal responsibility. Don't blame politics, Australians need to make a stand. We need to ensure that healthy rivers are here for our future generations. **Together, we can!***

Issued for Water For Rivers Sydney by [REDACTED]

For more information visit [REDACTED].