

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: Senate Inquiry into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan

We are pleased to provide a submission to this inquiry on behalf of the Murrabit Advancement Association (MAA), which represents the Benjeroop, Murrabit and Myall areas of the Gannawarra Shire.

The MAA, established in 1977, has as its aim the social and economic development of the area it represents. The Murrabit Country Market is one of the group's programs, running monthly and totalling 500 markets in September last year.

The district is irrigation farming dependent and any reduction in water supply has a devastating effect on the economy and therefore the social well-being of this part of the Gannawarra Shire. The reduction of water so far through government buy backs and other trading has rendered several irrigation businesses unviable.

Our community groups and businesses in turn are severely threatened through the resultant loss of population.

We therefore draw to your attention the following points:

- It is estimated that two million people live and work in the Murray Darling Basin.
- The community at large benefits from the huge production of food and fibre in the Murray-Darling Basin.
- Nothing can be produced in the Murray-Darling Basin without that one commodity: WATER!!
- It has taken more than 100 years to establish the infrastructure to make irrigation the efficient production model it is today. For example:
 - Channels and farm lay-out
 - Service industries
 - Schools
 - Towns
 - Community groups
- Any further reduction in water supply will render the Murray-Darling Basin less viable and less able to continue to make its magnificent contribution to the Australian economy.
- To date, water removed from irrigation for environments has failed to make a significant positive impact on the economy. Instead, the damage in socio economic terms is enormous.
- Despite the damage already done to the socio economic fabric, the Murray-Darling Basin will survive, providing no more water is lost.
- Restoration of water for the Murray-Darling Basin is obviously a key factor.

We therefore encourage those conducting the inquiry to recognise the serious and far reaching effect water loss has on the socio economic present and future of the Murray-Darling Basin.

- We support a proposal to hold the buy-back of water while the use and benefits of the environmental water is examined in the extended period.
- We encourage a process that establishes more water storage as part of the solution.

**Hugh Webb, Vice-President
Murrabit Advancement Association**