

Dear Senate Inquiry, Minister Plibersek and Minister Watt

Water buybacks are devastating to Regional communities.

The Federal Government should use taxpayer dollars wisely and invest in industries that employ people in regional areas. The irrigation industry employs a large number of people in regional areas across farming and manufacturing (cotton ginning/ pecan nut processing/citrus processing) these jobs contribute significantly to the health and vibrancy of regional communities.

When the Federal Government purchased the irrigation water from Collie Farms the town of Collarenebri suffered enormously. The Collarenebri school went from over 700 students to less than three hundred post the water buyback due to the loss of jobs and thus families from the area. Not only did it affect Collarenebri but also surrounding towns of Mungindi, Moree and Narrabri.

Water grows food and fibre which is essential for human life. The soil types in Northern NSW are perfect for irrigation. It is illogical to take the water from productive use and destroy a industry that provides critical jobs.

Many of the communities along the Murray Darling Basin have large indigenous communities that rely on employment from the irrigation industry. If our goal is to help improve indigenous outcomes we need the Federal Government to help create more job opportunities not less.

I would encourage the Federal Government to spend the taxpayer money on building more dams in each River Valley to increase the water available for irrigation, environment, social activities (fishing, water skiing, sailing, swimming) and critically flood mitigation.

Tax payer dollars should be used to create jobs and futures for people in Regional Communities.

Water Buybacks destroy people's livelihoods and encourage further population drift to the Metropolitan areas with the associated increase in housing and traffic congestion problems.

I am a dryland farmer with no irrigation interests. My interest is to see healthy, viable Regional towns and communities that have opportunities for our children to come back and live here.

Yours faithfully,
Geoff Manchee

GEOFF MANCHEE

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