

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on
Rural Affairs and Transport
P.O. Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2600
14th December 2010

Arguments against Water Cuts Proposed by the Murray Darling Basin Authority

Dear Sir/Madame,

As someone who moved to the Moree district in the 1960's I have been privileged to watch the community grow to become a world recognised agricultural centre. Much of the growth has been due primarily to the irrigation industry. The Moree Plains Shire is one of the most profitable agricultural shires in Australia.

For much of my life in Moree I have played an active role in business and in community organisations. This has enabled me to witness the positive influence the irrigation industry has had across all segments of the community.

Some of the community organisations who have reaped reward from irrigation investment include the Aboriginal Employment Scheme and Gwydir Industries; a facility that employs less able members of our community. The irrigation industry has also been a major supporter of agricultural, medical and educational scholarships and an active participant in community fund raising events.

As someone who has worked in the medical field I have seen how the community has benefitted from the increased resourcing that a buoyant economy and industry brings. To lose this would be disastrous. Especially when so much of the resourcing was achieved through industry and community lobbying.

Removal of water licences, even those sold voluntarily, have the potential to significantly impact critical infrastructure including educational and medical resources that service the community. We have already seen major cutbacks in water allocation with the sale of several licences from our valley. The impact has already been felt. The community has seen 120 businesses close and 3,000 people leave our shire in the last 10 years – we cannot afford any more.

All the communities of the Murray Darling Basin have suffered in the recent drought and now many are suffering from flood. Both drought and flood are a part of the Murray Darling. The Darling has stopped flowing many times in the last 200 years of history, simply a factor associated with drought. The Gwydir is essentially a closed system and contributes to the Darling flows only in major floods. None of this has been considered in the proposals put forward for the basin to date.

Regional communities are resilient and can deal with the challenges of drought or flood, but we should not be expected to deal with political mismanagement aimed at satisfying the needs of an ill informed green vote.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Gall