



3/34 LAGOON STREET
PO Box 507
GOONDIWINDI QLD 4390
PHONE 07 46713888
FAX 07 46711039

WEB WWW.BRFF.COM.AU

CHAIRMAN: DAVID COULTON

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: TIM NAPIER

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

PROVISIONS OF THE WATER ACT 2007

SUBMISSION DUE BY 5PM FRIDAY MARCH 18TH 2011

Prepared by

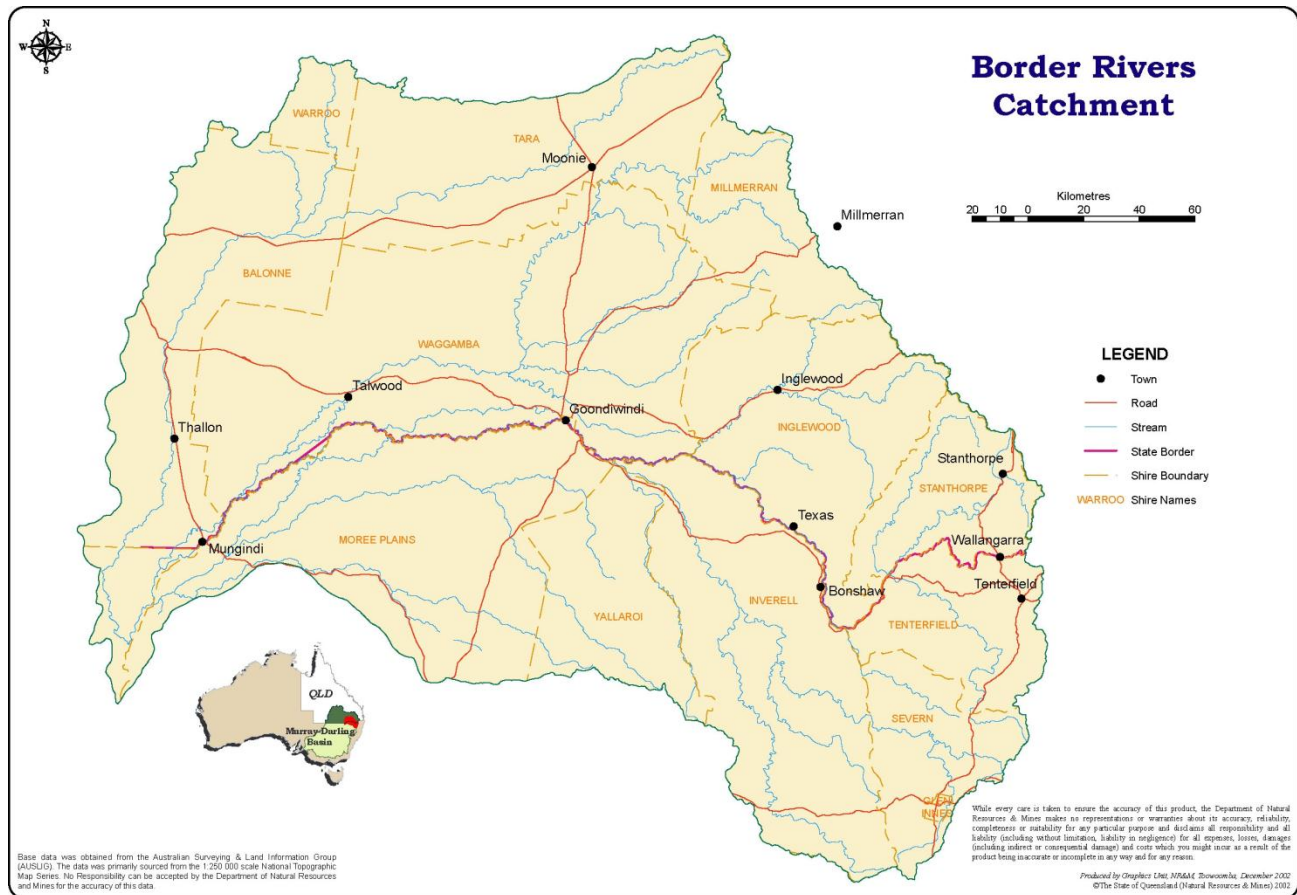
TIM NAPIER

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

AFFILIATES: BOOMI-GNOURA GNOURA WATER USERS ASSOCIATION; DUMARESQ VALLEY IRRIGATORS ASSOCIATION; EASTERN RECHARGE GROUNDWATER USERS ASSOCIATION; LOWER WEIR RIVER WATER USERS ASSOCIATION; MACINTYRE BROOK IRRIGATORS ASSOCIATION; MACINTYRE RIVER BASIN WATER USERS ASSOCIATION; MACINTYRE VALLEY COTTON GROWERS ASSOCIATION; MOLE & SOVEREIGN WATER USERS ASSOCIATION; MUNGINDI WATER USERS & COTTON GROWERS ASSOCIATION; PINDARI WATER USERS ASSOCIATION; UPPER WEIR RIVER & TRIBUTARIES WATER USERS ASSOCIATION

INTRODUCTION

Border Rivers Food and Fibre (BRFF) represents the water users and entitlement-holders of the Border Rivers region of southern Queensland and northern New South Wales. These water-users responsibly utilise the water resources of the Macintyre Brook, the Dumaresq, Macintyre, Severn, Weir and Barwon River systems and the Eastern Recharge Zone of the Great Artesian Basin. Production from irrigated agriculture includes vegetables, herbs, stone-fruit, hay, cereals, coarse grains and cotton. Its contribution to the local economy exceeds \$500 million (farm gate) in average years.



This document represents the views of the members of BRFF, though individuals are entitled to their own views relating to their own circumstances.

BRFF is also a member of the NSW Irrigators Council and National Irrigators Council. Whilst generally endorsing their views, we maintain the right to hold independent positions.

SUBMISSION

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide a submission on this most important matter.

Border Rivers Food and Fibre has strong concerns about the Commonwealth Water Act 2007. While accepting that a balanced, triple-bottom-line Basin Plan may be produced under the Act as it currently stands, we believe that 'possible' doesn't provide sufficient certainty for rural and regional communities. The risks, we submit, lie in subsequent revisions of the Basin Plan that will require further reductions in productive water-use, right across the Murray Darling Basin.

In addition to this, we believe that with the Act being interpreted so differently by the Australian Government Solicitor on different occasions, that such uncertainty as currently exists will only continue and that a challenge of the Act in the High Court of Australia is inevitable. The risk of such a challenge, from either side of the debate, only perpetuates the current uncertainty surrounding the Act and the Basin Plan process, and further undermines confidence in the government being able to deliver an acceptable outcome to all parties.

We wholeheartedly support the submissions of our two peak bodies, the New South Wales Irrigators' Council and the National Irrigators' Council.