

## TRANSCRIPT

### TIM JACKSON, ALMONDS AUSTRALIA

Thanks very much for coming out. It's nice to have a change where I only have to drive up the road to speak...

A few things uh, just a follow up on Ben's comments. Just some stats that we've been gathering and putting in submissions. From my point of view, if you're talking about which industries are going to suffer a bit (praying on the vulnerable) AITHER published a report in 2020 commissioned by the Victorian Government which showed that if they take 500 gicalitres of water out of the out of the basin- there's no horticultural product that would be viable.

If you're talking about a short term lease price of over \$400 - almonds are out, tapping out at \$350 and I know a lot of people in the room here will say well almonds can afford it. There's that perception, so I phoned around last week when I was doing my submission. At \$350 a Mg, long term, that's not one off that's the average out to 2035. That will go up from there. There is no industry, no irrigated industry cause we are at the top of the tree in horticulture, if we can't afford it no one can afford it. So I don't wanna put too fine a point on this sort of economic damage that this Bill will cause.

The other issue, the other point, just made in line with what Ben has just said there, that I deal with a lot of corporates in our industry and our industry has been facing the challenges around the social licence to grow because of the perception around water and we have multi nationals who have to make international standards around E, S and G. Now this Bill ignores E,S and G and just goes to the E. I mean you can't have the rest of the world operating on ESG and then have a government in Australia saying you don't have to worry about that. This is just fundamental global standards around how you actually operate you gotta bring everyone home for the ride and here we have industries like mine and all the rest of the industries in here - grape growers were told the other day that if you're not sustainably certified we're not gonna take your grapes- Now we've got the government saying we're just gonna take your water regardless of whether you're sustainably certified so they're not gonna take the water but they're just gonna force people into selling. So I'm just letting you know that this is not about picking and choosing.

Our industry's water use has increased water in recent years as plantings have expanded. Rice and cotton use a lot more than us. But the beauty of rice and cotton against our permanent planning is that when it get s dry and the price gets too high they don't plat a crop, they lease their water to permanent planted crops, so they still make a living. If you change that dynamic, if you increase the price to something where rice and cotton is not viable all of a sudden your market collapses, your industry collapses. We're not talking about picking winners and losers and few red wine growers go under. This is fundamental because buying back 500Gl doesn't work for anyone in horticulture in the basin.

*(yeah)*

So I just wanna make it really clear, like it's not it's not just uh um a few people turning up and having a winge, I think you'll find the next few weeks momentum will grow here and you probably need a bigger place for meetings like this because there will be people burning books again or whatever they were doing because once they understand the impact of buybacks I think it's going to be entire communities in the basin very angry.. um.. let's hope it's not too late.

## TRANSCRIPT – BEN HASSLET

GDay, Ben Haslett,

I've um got a range of things. It's a.. it's a highly complicated problem we understand that, and I've been involved in water um area for a long time, and I really like what Craig Null said originally; we need a healthy working river.

You know what I think we're headed towards is we might end up with the healthy river but it's not gonna work anymore and there's a big deal with that.

So one of the things, I think about this is we're not doing what we said we're gonna do. Um I was around when we negotiated the 450 and the irrigators said we don't necessarily like that but in the dying days of the Rann and Rudd Gov that's what was negotiated and it was always carefully said that wasn't going to be brought back and there was going to be no socio economic impact talking to our um Deputy Premier and Water Minister, they don't believe that. They think that it's not gonna be associated with the impact they buy it back which I think is likely not true and we talked in about if you take the first leg around the bucket you know so much in target the last we'll see the last leg around the bucket is a message isn't that so I think we're gonna be careful there that we dodo what we say we're gonna doit also means that as regions have tried to put forward uh we look about development if any of us plant a tree or a vine we're probably looking at a 25 year time frame maybe a 30 year time frame no one makes those kind of bets if there's unstable governments so I'm concerned both the state and federal government are leading us to go well why would you invest um secondly on that I don't think there's any accountability that's a caring when it comes to environment environmental watering um I live next to a Ramsar site we're absolutely below environmental health some of the things I said I said often the only people I see in that Ramsar site are my 75 year old parents farms planting trees living water ways making sure it functions we managed 50% of Australia's landmass as farmers who's gonna do this if we're not there so there's no accountability or recognition of that fact the other thing is as far as um innovation weeping us being innovated every day where's the environmental innovation that's occurring we start to look at we say we're we're not 450 but there's more than 450 still outstanding and there's another at least two or three hundred of some of these downward projects get up that's maybe 6 50700 that's not the number it really is it's 900 to 1,000 gig because all this water is being bought at uh long term equivalents or cap equivalents that takes it if it's point eight to maybe 950 or 1,000 gig.

Interestingly we look at the last 10 years the CEWH hasn't once used the environment in water in fact one of the years they carried over 1,000 gicalitres so where's the accountability there we're also asking okay so you get the 450 back can you actually use it for its own the aim was to get overbank flows 80,000 megalitre when we originally negotiated 2750we know we needed those overbank flows to get environmental health on the lower section of the river that's from a trigger down that really suffered we didn't get those can't see anybody that can actually tell us that they can achieve that uh as far as the two goes without a natural flood occurring if you can't achieve that why buying it back it's gonna cost Australian taxpay billions and billions of dollars it's actually gonna cost taxpayers multiple times once when we buy it twice when we take the area out of production that wouldn't make paid tax mm hmm and will cost again when uh we'd start talking about social work costing and it's gonna cost the community yep so there's at least three costs there that we're not talking about.

And then lastly it's gonna cost the environment because we're spending a whole stack of money on something that's supposed to deliver the environment that's not gonna happen so that \$5 billion just

doesn't come from anywhere that means we're not doing other projects so I don't think there's any accountability at the moment uh federally or unstable all the loads being asked to be born all the pain by the people in the basin I'm not seeing anybody in the city saying okay yep this is a national national water resource we're gonna use it for national good where's the pain anywhere else not seeing which city has said we're gonna give up 200 GL on the basin are we gonna cut that back to 140 /130 we're gonna contribute which city said our parks and gardens gonna be water from groundwater and not from the river not singing which which you know yes I wouldn't how much water are they gonna not singing why are we being asked to be in every bit of the line I think we when we come back to say we've got to do what we said we're going to do we gotta all start being innovated and looking at these other projects cause it's just it's not okay to sit there we start asking about oh what studies been done here and there and people come back to us as the barber communities gone oh you guys done any work on this I'm looking like um hang on a second what taxes pay for state and federal employees in dedicated water departments what work are they doing on this where's the evidence where they come back say hey guys this is what it could actually mean it's it's just not we're not seeing it we're not seeing any understanding um the other thing when we talk about instruments to achieve what we needed to achieve we all get a bit iffy when the reserve back says we're gonna fix our economic problems just with that one blood force tool we've got so what are we doing now we're absolutely being lazy with regard to how we're trying to achieve our wrong claims we go I've got one tool let's buy it back it just doesn't work uh simply because you go well if you lose enough people may stand for labs you know people talk about tourism and other industry coming to a place but this industry was started 150 years ago there about by changing just a fantastic place to do what we do great and it's really good for the river to do it here so that's been great for South Australia because the water runs all the way down before we actually pull it out so if you got those systems it means that we don't have those other infrastructure systems uh for people as well tourists.

Lastly I'd say be really careful if you're trying to prosecute a case about food production being the main reason we need to go forward or main reason we need to change this um uh one of my professors in the US was at uni there worked for uh Washington and he said they tried that in California where they had the drought and they failed dismally because the people in the street who we need to get up and answer about this didn't see any difference in the supermarket that's not where it occurred they could still import stuff still have their tomatoes or whatever they needed the real pain was around the farmers at two three four employees suddenly there weren't the number of people going to schools and said the real pain was in the community of the fabric and your boundary continue to build economic growth in the regions so we gotta be careful not just to hang this on saying without this water there won't be food which we could probably lose half of it and still sustain much of what Australia would do but not do it well.

*WEBSTER: Tony thanks for that no not on let me just find the arm I mean cause people don't wanna hit my tapping coming through that hang on how do we turn this on I don't know about this yeah got it now hello uh excellent thank you for that that was really uh good to hear and very comprehensive which is very helpful for us um hear what you're saying about food production my concern is that while we hurt in the regions Timberland City still don't get that and that's the problem we need a fighting argument to take to the cities because uh greens and Labour that's where they live and they don't get it and they don't feel the pain even when we talk about the things that you've spoken about schools you know closing down basically um have you got any other insights from America or from wherever that could assist in that argument?*

So on the food production side it's saying the argument needs to be about healthy safe clean food um yeah if we're talking so that's saying that you can check you can get this cause you know that we brought in a certain way and we get checked on that whether it's fresh carrots and other things so that's one argument then yep second if they're environmentally minded you can talk about food miles basically growing here it's come straight to you the freshness of your brain yeah yeah u and then I think the other the big one is actually Tax pad dollars it's your money what we're doing is we're gonna take money off you to buy something that we can't use and it's gonna cut another community we could be using this money for a strangest brand of good in other ways so part of the argument is we don't need to take this money off you if we can keep production here as well yeah good right.