



**SUBMISSION NO. 120**

Commonwealth Standing Committee on Future Water Supplies for Australia's Rural Industries & Communities. 1/ Country Town Treated Water Schemes. Community expectations continue to become less tolerant of poor quality drinking water. Country like Campbell Town Cressy & Ross (800-400 residents) need Federal Government Grants to make treated water schemes affordable. Country towns need facilities with the same standards as large metropolitan areas, in order to attract people as economic upturn occurs. People have an expectation that they have the same standard of services as cities do. / 2/ / Privatisation of Water. Privatising water is not good as it leads to exploitation & manipulation of the market for water. If the market for water is truly free, then it may work. In reality water will never be free, as it is subject to Government regulation, which leads to imbalance between supply and demand because of other issues like environmental flows, health of rivers etc. Water is a communal asset, should be in the hands of local communities and regulated accordingly taking into account many factors.

The Tasmanian Government has created one water baron, by giving the licence to nearly all water in Tasmania to the Hydro. The Hydro has already tried to exploit their position by trying to charge farmers for water stored and used in all future developments. If farmers had not taken this issue up through the TFGA with the State Government, the Hydro may have succeeded, which would have discouraged investment in value added agricultural industries creating jobs for Tasmanians.

3/ Economic rent to dam owners. Builders of large dams should not be able to exploit irrigators and farmers. Water is part of the natural environment and entrepreneurs should not be allowed to exploit it. Dam builders should be limited to a fair return on capital and not be able to harvest any economic rent. Organisations that own Freeways or Gas pipelines are restricted to a "fair" and equitable return and can not exploit their monopolistic situation, so the same argument should apply to owners of water storage infrastructures.

4/ We acknowledge the importance of environmental flows and believe local farmers as well as community members must become involved in establishing acceptable levels. If necessary to cut established water licences, then affected irrigators must be compensated. Environmental flows have a value that must be born by the whole community, if there is a problem.

5/ Catchments require different policies. Catchments throughout Australia differ greatly. The problems within the Murray Basin are not the same as the Elizabeth Macquarie Basin. Local solutions for catchments should be driven by local people.

6/ Need for water stored for economic development. Elizabeth/Macquarie basin has plenty of water, the problem is a shortage of water stored. Once water is stored and used, it will lead to agricultural investment in value added industries which leads to greater employment opportunities.

7/ Too much red tape with Dam Building. Each State Government authority should appoint a specialist State wide authority in order to provide a consistent and thorough dam-works approval process.

8/ Drought proofing the Rural community in an economic and environmental way by developing water storage for use over the cropping season. Drought proofing is possible on an individual farm by farm basis or by strategically-based major irrigation reservoir schemes. The majority of the community would prefer a community-based irrigation scheme to minimise one of the significant input costs.

Submitted by David Downie