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To The Committee on Regional Australia  
Regarding the Proposed Basin Plan.

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Submission for the Proposed Basin Plan.

With our volatile climatic conditions, with growing population and a growing industry it has become inevitable that the water supply for Australia requires a long term and reliable solution, utilizing the existing natural resources.

All the part solutions to solve local problems only deal with the symptoms, they consume a lot of effort to redistribute and reallocate **the insufficient water available** without attacking the major problem of **long term adequate reliable supply**.

We are lucky that this wet winter cleaned out and rejuvenated the sick Darling system, but the dry seasons will reappear and will show that **we need a constant additional fresh water flow from a large reliable water source**.

The demand is only increasing with the growth of population and production.

Water is one of the major lifelines of our economy and I feel water should long term be managed similar to the electricity grid, with an interstate supply grid consisting of large pipelines and storage dams combined with the existing river systems.

Such a system would offer the great opportunity to **transfer available excess water south from the northern rivers** which discharge their excess water into the Gulf of Carpentaria during the wet season.

The water could be directed south over the watershed around Hughenden to the rivers flowing south which could then feed tributaries of the Murray Darling via pipe lines.

The existing infrastructure would look after distribution.

With the abundance of sun in this area we can supply the energy for the pipeline pumps from solar power or from wind turbines, without the need for fuel and without pollution. The system is energy neutral contrary to energy hungry desalination plants and can be extended by incorporating additional rivers in the Gulf region.

There are suitable systems available and combined with the storage dams the water grid would also offer power supply for the remote communities.

Nowadays Solar Tower plants could even drive the pumps with their wind turbines directly coupled, if solar heated air for the towers can be provided economically.

The great opportunities which an adequate and reliable water source along the western part of the Great Divide offers are just beyond our imagination.

The major pipe line connections from the dams of the northern rivers to the Darling basin, utilising existing rivers should be below 1000km.

This is not a technical problem.

The water flow to the south would also open up more fertile land!

This would be a huge infra structure project but essential and with unimaginable benefits for our country.

I suggest that the many Government organisations with experienced and competent personnel in water management do the groundwork and **establish the basic concept. A water grid with the aim to guarantee reliable and sustainable water supply for growing demand.**

Based on this master plan suitable sites for the design of dams, pipelines, intermediate storage facilities and pumping stations can be given to the industry for the detailed planning and construction.

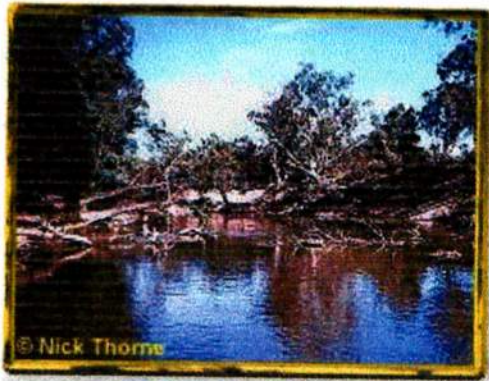
We have the beautiful example of the regional Ord River scheme which was created by the initiative of a local station owner. It is not only a clever system but fairly simple and we should use the experience gained. It is based on storing the abundant water in the wet season for controlled use later. It took about 20 years to overcome all the associated problems but now the **people of the Kununurra and Wyndham area never run out of water, have electric power and have the most fertile land in Australia.**

The North to South water grid could basically be a combination of several Ord River schemes inter connected via existing rivers and interconnecting pipelines and storage facilities in the upper river regions.

The water grid has the big advantage that Australia has all the necessary engineering expertise and the resources locally to carry out such a long term Nation Building project.

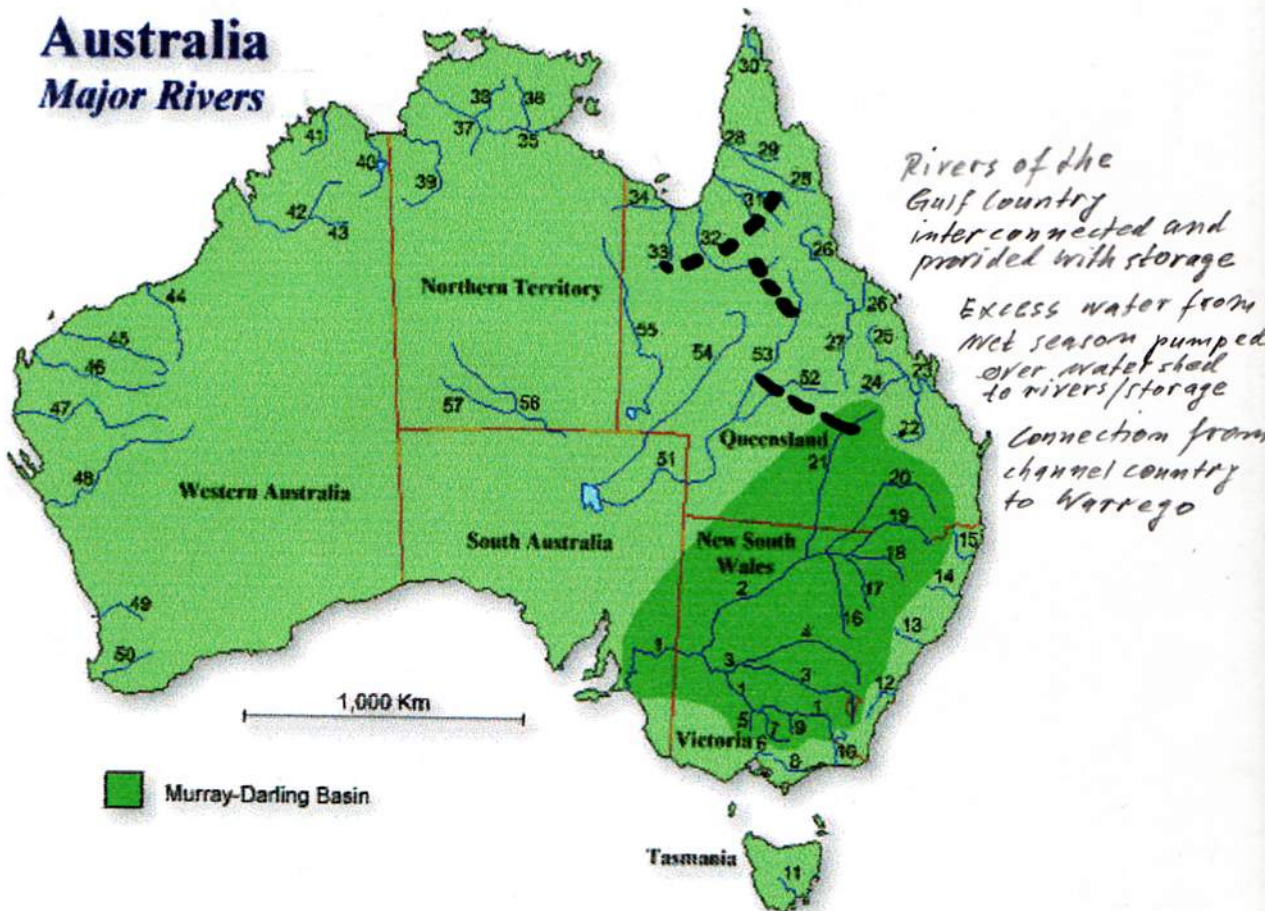
Yours faithfully  
Walter Oechsle

# Major Australian Rivers



The Goulburn River in North Eastern Victoria

The Goulburn is the most important Victorian tributary to the Murray River. This section is typical of many rivers in the Murray-Darling basin. Here it is full of fallen trees which provide the habitat preferred by native fish. Unfortunately, its use as merely a supply channel for irrigation using water from the very large man made Lake Eildon severely interferes with natural cycles in the river. As a result, despite what seems like adequate habitat in the middle and lower reaches, fish populations are far below optimum.



See Key below for river names

[Map](#) | [Numeric Key](#) | [Alphabetical Key](#)

<http://www.nativefish.asn.au/ozrivers.html>

*Thoughts for a "water grid" to transfer excess water from the gulf country in the wet season to the south.*

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