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To Members of The standing Committee on Regional Australia. Some points I would like to be brought up during discussions are as follows.

Buying back large water allocations in inland Australia will force more people to relocate to coastal areas. Coastal cities are already overpopulated for the infrastructure that is available.

More water could be added to the Murray-Darling Basin by tapping into excess water from Nth Queensland. It would be a permanent solution. Buying back water is only a band-aid. Early explorers made no mention of the Murrumbidgee Rr. flowing into the sea which leads me to think inland rivers dried up long before settlement.

We need more food to be produced not less. Other countries have realized this long ago.

I doubt if any committee members could imagine the full impact of evaporation on a day when temperatures reach over 45 degrees. Most of the buy-back water in Queensland could evaporate long before it reached South Australia.

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Regarding towns and villages. If people leave, there will be a large number of empty houses and wasted halls & schools. Considering the shortage of houses in Australia, this is not a good scenario.

Hoping my input can help with discussions about this important topic.

Regards

(Mrs)

Made Margaret
Golding

\$9b plan to divert water

Canal system would ease drought inland

Brian Williams
ENVIRONMENT REPORTER

A SYDNEY man has devised a \$9 billion plan to shift water from the Burdekin and other major east-flowing rivers in north Queensland to the parched inland areas of NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

The plan proposes to channel about 4000 gigalitres of water south annually, with about 60 per cent used by farmers for irrigation and the rest for domestic use in the cities such as Toowoomba, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

Some water would also be allocated to improve environ-

long and take just four to five years to recover its costs.

Mr Bowring said the world's next boom market would be food and unless Australia had adequate water to fuel production it would miss out. He hoped the Federal Government would finance his scheme.

The idea comes as cuts to southern irrigators' water allocations were announced last week by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

Mr Bowring said canals worked well in the US and when it was considered that the Government proposed to spend \$8 billion on water buy-backs, his scheme was not overly expensive. He proposed water be sold at \$600 a megalitre.

The system would have on-going energy costs because in some places water would have to be lifted across high country.

Mr Bowring said the scheme also could channel water from the Gulf country and water could be obtained from as far north in Queensland as the Herbert River.

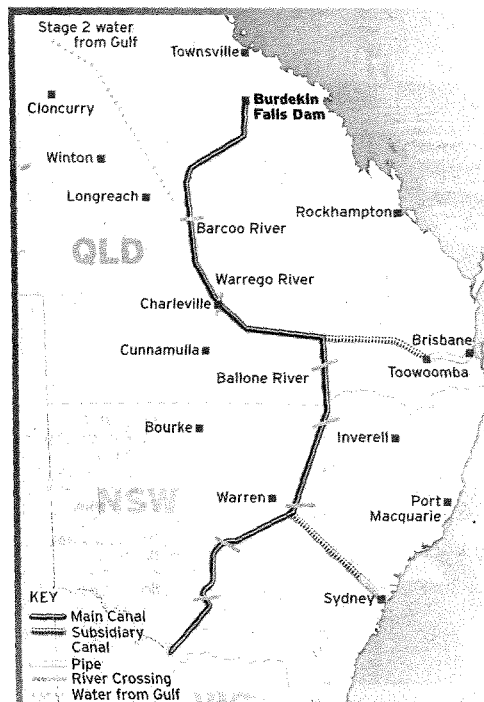
An average 29,000 gigalitres of fresh water flows from the Burdekin on to the Great Barrier Reef each year and Mr Bowring's scheme would harvest just 13 per cent of this.

"Last year more water went to sea from the Burdekin than the Murray-Darling Basin and all city dams combined," he said.

Mr Bowring said he accepted that many people would oppose his idea but he was convinced it would also have many influential supporters.

"We're only going to take that water going to sea," he said. "We don't expect an easy ride but we are not trying to damage anything. We don't want the Murray and Murrumbidgee to dry up."

Is this a pipe dream or an idea whose time has finally come? Join the debate at couriermail.com.au



AUSTRALIA'S WATER TORTURE

TAKING water from areas of plenty to inland regions plagued with drought is not a new idea in Australia.

Under the Bradfield Scheme - developed by the architect of the Story and Sydney Harbour bridges, Dr John Bradfield and submitted to the government in 1933 - water would have been diverted from coastal flowing rivers to the inland Warrego and Thomson rivers and south to the Murray-Darling.

That plan was condemned as *unfeasible* and never pursued, but it has continued to provoke debate and similar proposals, such as Terry Bowring's latest idea.

And just like Bradfield, Mr Bowring's plan has run into a wall of early doubt:

"We've previously investigated proposals for pipeline systems from the state's north and with each of those it has been established beyond doubt that the pumping costs are enormous and prohibitive."

Queensland Premier Anna Bligh

"This is the same scheme that (former premier Peter) Beattie popped up with in 2007. It has major problems. It is incredibly expensive and environmentally destructive."

Queensland Conservation Council co-ordinator Toby Hutcheon

"Water's heavy, costs a lot to shift and there are other sources closer. Brisbane sewerage water could be piped up over the range, for example. I don't rule anything out but these schemes need scrutiny."

Agforce water spokesman Kim Bremner, an irrigator at Dalby

mental flows in river systems like the Murray.

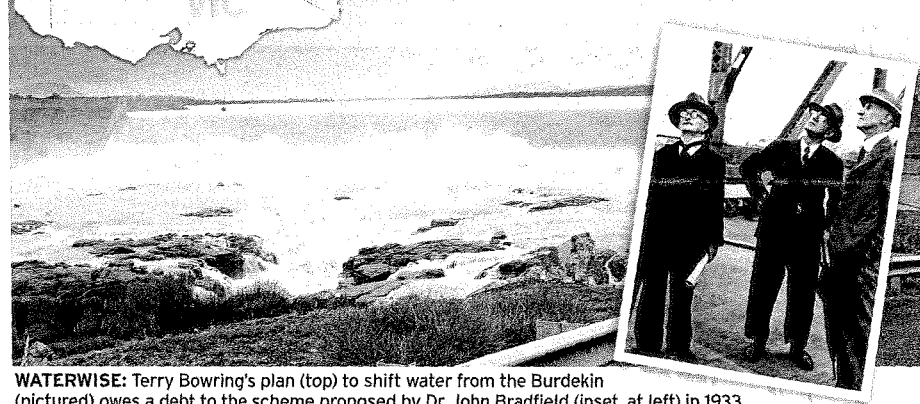
Chemical engineer Terry Bowring said yesterday the project would remove the future need for expensive desalination plants in Brisbane and Sydney.

He said the plan was similar to the old Bradfield scheme proposed in 1933 but no one had taken the idea as far as he had with costings.

"I've been dealing with government people," he said. "Nothing's been approved but it has been costed."

The system would use canals rather than piping, which had been calculated to be too expensive.

The system would take six years to build, be about 1800km



WATERWISE: Terry Bowring's plan (top) to shift water from the Burdekin (pictured) owes a debt to the scheme proposed by Dr John Bradfield (inset, at left) in 1933