

Submission No:	115
Date Received:	26/11/2010
Secretary:	SL

The Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Regional Australia
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

I am a fourth generation grazier with wool growing our main enterprise. Our property is approximately 3,480 hec of Traprock Country situated 35km west of Stanthorpe in SE QLD. Mainly suited to running dry sheep for wool growing with some small alluvial flats along the main water course known as Pikes Creek. This water course runs through the middle of our property and is in the upper reaches of the Murray Darling system. Glen Lyon dam is located on this creek well south of us.

I have held an irrigation license for a small area 4 hec for many years and still use this license to irrigate pasture and occasionally small crops such as pumpkins and tomatoes. We use the water sparingly and only when there is sufficient and never reduce water holes to a level that would endanger fish or aquatic life.

We are of the opinion that our water use over many years has had no detrimental effect at all on the water course. We have all the main Murray Darling fish species thriving in the water hole we irrigate out of ie. Murray Cod, Golden Perch and Catfish. We have actually seen numbers of these fish increase over the last 30 years.

Why are we concerned about a potential 30% or more reduction in the area we can irrigate?

As I've said I'm a fourth generation grazier now aged 54. I have a son who is 22 and a daughter 24. While we have been successful wool growers we believe that for our younger generation to see a viable future on our property they need to have options and opportunity to diversify. If our irrigation license was taken away or severely reduced it would take away some important opportunities while at the same time reducing the value of our property.

While both our children are gaining tertiary qualifications and we don't know yet whether they will see a future here, they would have to take into account what I have discussed above.

In conclusion, I am not against implementing water efficiency measures and better irrigation technology.

I think that is a good thing but I think it is extremely dangerous to implement blanket reductions on people's irrigation capability on the basis of very doubtful benefit to the river system and the environment. It would have zero impact in our situation. We only have a small license but surely we are a microcosm of thousands of other family farms that would be affected to varying degrees.

Yours Sincerely
Gordon Smith