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Good Afternoon,

I am writing as to the proposed Murray-Darling Basin Plan draft. I live in the area of concern, but am not directly affected by the issue – we are manufacturers of product that is used in Supermarkets to maintain shelf life of perishable foods and reduce energy consumption, so in a sense I am looking from the outside at this issue.

My understanding is, that the overall catalyst and driver behind this plan is to maintain a certain level of flow down the rivers for the benefit of the natural environment. By reducing the available water to farmers, there will be more on hand to send down the river, and ultimately, into the ocean.

This is a very simple issue, and has simple solutions.

Firstly, in the past 15 years particularly, there would have been many times when the rivers would have ceased to flow, was it not for dams and water storage.

So then we can confirm, that dams and water storage are a benefit and essential to maintaining water flow for the natural environment.

We can also confirm, that dams and water storage are a benefit to humans – fellow Australians – that rely either directly or indirectly on this supply of water for their livelihoods.

Not only farmers, not only people in rural communities, but the nation as a whole, benefits from these water storage provisions.

It is a known fact, that most developed nations, particularly those without regular rainfall, have extensive water storage, and many developing nations are currently constructing vast capacity water storage, for the good of the environment. (please do not let us be mistaken, Humans are actually a very vital part of our environment). Yet Australia, with its vast areas of desert and semi-arid regions, a country that should be conserving every drop of this precious resource, has not undertaken any significant water storage projects in decades.

Persons that are determined, hell bent you might say, on reducing water storage, reducing food production, striving in some deluded way to “return to nature” are anti-human, anti-society, and their ranting and ravings are less than useless. They, if asked, could not tell you the ideal state of nature, because they do not know it. We, as intelligent and responsible human beings and members of society, must consider the situation in its current form, and act for the best interests of all concerned. This means being pro-active, not re-active. It means being positive, not negative. It means we must accept the challenges of this diverse country, and the challenges indeed of the world, which involve providing, at the very minimum, basic services such as shelter, electricity, food, and running water. It means that we assess our greatest resource, water, and consider the varying supply conditions, (ie: rainfall not regular) and then conclude the only long term viable solution is more water storage. It is folly to think of any resource, be it coal, gas, gold, oxygen, timber etc, that is scarce (in some sense all resources are scarce) that we would not conserve, save, store, and manage in an effective way. Yet some persons have this rather questionable thinking, that by recklessly ignoring any proper management of our greatest resource, by ignoring the fact that supply and demand cycles of water in this country are not concurrent, by mindlessly trying to limit the storage of water, they will somehow benefit the environment, and mankind as a whole.

The Honourable Tony Burke states 3 objectives for the Murray Darling Basin Plan: Economic, Socio-economic, and Environment – The “Triple Bottom Line”. The only satisfactory solution that meets and exceeds these 3 criteria, is increased water storage. It should be a prime Government initiative, it should be a high priority, dare I say it should take precedence even over the mighty “nation-building” NBN. Let us take up the challenge, create some parliamentary debate and dialogue, and get some action on increased water storage, for the sake of the fish, the frogs, the birds, the spiny backed cockroach, and of course, last but not least, the various collections of humans that have populated this great land.

Sincerely,

Garry Pagden