



10 December 2010

Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Rural Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6021 – Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

To Whom It May Concern:

**Re: Draft Murray Darling Basin Authority Plan**

I am writing to urge you to oppose the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) Draft Plan for the Murray Darling Basin.

After attending the MDBA community consultation meeting in Moree it is clear to me that the scientific rigour of the MDBA draft plan has not been verified – numerous members of the Moree community successfully challenged the claims made in the report. This has made me question the legitimacy of the MDBA and has highlighted the need for the MDBA to engage local knowledge and expertise before proposing unwarranted water reductions.

From a personal perspective I am employed in an agricultural business in Moree that is directly reliant on the irrigation industry for all operations. I am highly concerned that the MDBA Plan's proposed water reductions will threaten my job security and future employment. If I lose my job I will be forced to leave Moree and this will mean the local businesses and sporting clubs I support will suffer. This also demonstrates the increased housing pressure metropolitan areas will face with increased numbers of rural dwellers returning to the city to find alternative employment. Metropolitan areas will also be affected by increases in food prices if the proposed water cuts eventuate due to a decrease in food production.

Another key concern for the Moree community is that the MDBA plan has given little consideration to the indigenous members of the Moree community, the Kamilaroi people. Moree has a large indigenous population and any reduction in water allocations will mean a reduction in the amount of health, education, employment and counselling services available for indigenous people. Water cuts will result in increased indigenous unemployment and exaggerate the need for government financial assistance.

On a final note Moree has already experienced significant rural decline over the past 5-10 years and it saddens me that surrounding towns such as Inverell continue to thrive whilst our community continues to suffer setbacks such as this. Please help us to protect our livelihood and to ensure the survival of our community.

Lauren Picone  
December 1, 2010  
Page 2

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Lauren Picone