



Murray – Darling Submission---

I will have to go back to my young days, I remember the Hume Dam being built, and on several occasions went with my parents to see it progress. As you may recall the reason for this dam was to supply water for irrigation to provide food and produce for our own use and also for export. Previous to this the river rose and fell according to the amount of rain falling on the catchment. There were times when the river was almost dry, like in 1914 my father said he walked across the river at Albury leading his horse.

Also in 1914 he went to SA, to Mannum, and the river was so low the sea water came right up the river and killed all the fresh water fish, because there was no barrage at the mouth of the Murray. Then going back further in time, when Stuart went down the Murray he reported there were large areas along side of the river with no trees. (This can be found in Stuart's report of his journey). Over all the use of the water stored was a great development and turned out for the betterment of the country. But, History will tell you that no large expanse of irrigation carries on for much longer than 100 years. Mainly because it is not planned the correct way, and the sub soil becomes water logged from too much water over too long a period. Remember the weirs and dams were constructed for growing food and not for the environment in the first instance, and also for navigation.

The locking up of large areas of Red Gums is not a good environmental practise as Red Gums will only germinate and grow in the right conditions, usually after a flood of water then the right temperature to create the establishing for the young plants. Then they usually come up very thick and close together that they will not develop to healthy trees unless there is something to thin them out, usually animals or sheep or cattle, as the native animals are too low in numbers to do this work these days. An example of this can be seen in the Henty Common, Where the Doodle Cooma swamp receded as the water evaporated and left a lot of seed in the debris and germinated about 30 years ago.

Environmental flows are useless unless they are at the right time, Usually nature works this out and did for centuries. We have so called experts who seem to know every thing, But do they? As you are well aware we are having an environmental flow down the rivers now, this they do not admit as they did not organise this situation. As at present we have enough water in the dams to give the irrigators 100% of their allocations. Which seems to me a waste of water if we continue to receive average rainfall. This we should receive, as records we have show we have a ten year cycle of 10 dryer years then 10 wetter years, last year was the last of the 10 dryer years so we should get 9 years of above average rainfall.

Early this year I attended a Landcare Conference in South Australia and took a bus trip to see Lake Alexandrina and to the mouth of the Murray River on Hindmarsh Island. The Lake was then over 1 metre below sea level and in a bad state. And yet all the dams supplying Adelaide water were all near full, thus the water that would have gone to Lake Alexandrina from the Murray had been pumped into the Adelaide water supply. At Langhorne Creek we inspected an elaborate set up to irrigate vineyards in that area with a lot of money to pipe water direct from the Murray, not for food but for wine. This project was financed by Penny Wong at that time for her own state but was not spoken about Australia wide, (Food for thought)

This whole plan for the Murray-Darling has to be put in the right perspective and all interests have their own say and be respected for their own ideas and purposes to come to a sound conclusion. We have had climate change all the time, look at Mungo Lakes and what was there. The environment looks after itself, man can mess it up easy, and I would not like to be one of those who are doing that and have the name of Environmentalist.

Hoping you can see that there are a lot of people wanting to see the right thing done.

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