

Submission No: 284-1.
 Date Received: 25/1/11.
 Secretary: SC

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 STANDING COMMITTEE ON
 REGIONAL AUSTRALIA
 25 JAN 2011
 RECEIVED

Good morning.

I would like to draw your attention to several matters associated with the MDBA plan that make it a very unfair document for the people it most affects.

First, the length of the associated documents. The legislation plus the three MDBA volumes run in excess of one week's full time reading (and I read a lot!). Factor into that the necessary prior knowledge (within which is nested, for the legislatively, environmentally and politically lay public, the necessity and unfamiliarity of 'new knowledge') required to begin to make sense of the readings, what you have done with this mountain of paper work is exclude, from a sense of personal ownership and participation in local community matters, people from engaging with the responsibility for managing their own lives. That is, the level of literacy required to be an active participant in the proceedings of this document is unrealistically demanding. Add to this the fact that the timing of this meeting (as a function of the *de rigueur* nature of the information asymmetry you have practised to date) coincides with many water rights holders preparing for cropping activity and/or taking a holiday from work, the sensitivity and camaraderie you have displayed in managing the MDBA issue is appalling.

Did you know that every day information flow through the farming community proceeds verbally and that much, much business is done on the basis of trust in the words of another? I didn't learn this until I asked a few farmer friends why they hadn't written submissions. They simply said that's not how they do business. You, the government, do business by with big words and lengthy documents. Don't you have a moral responsibility, with the massive call to resources that you have, to engage with farmers in a way they do business to ensure that there is equal ownership of the dilemma and solution? Farmers don't have the time nor experience in dealing with the type of information you are throwing at them to respond adequately in the time frame you have allowed. You have bullied the family farmer and every single person in affected by the MDBA and for that I would relish the chance to slap you all in the face.

regions

Before you bring out the role of representative bodies, are you silly enough to believe that the words of a corporate representative reflect the hardship that this plan will bring to the everyday family farmer? I know that none of my farmer family and friends are happy with the way that the corporate representations you have heard today reflect their fears and concerns. They represent a metamorphic view, one that has been massaged to fit the corporate concerns and thus, leave the voice of the family farmer a whisper.

Second, the MDBA documents acknowledge that the science upon which any sustainable diversion limit is determined is, at best, of medium veracity. This corresponds to the veracity of knowledge associated with the IPCC document pertaining to the future of the Himalayan glacier, which turned out to be a complete hum dinger. So by what right do you act with medium veracity knowledge to make high certainty consequences upon the people subjected to the MDBA plan?

Third, much of the mind-set associated with the thinking and interpreting data associated with water flow is utopian. The Murray has dried up in the past, its bed has gone acidic in the past, its mouth has closed in the past and plants and animals have died in the past. If it weren't for the controlled water flow for irrigation purposes, this is exactly what we would have seen before the recent flooding. As the semi-scientific status of the data pertaining to water flow through the Murray only represents 0.00228% of its acknowledged existence, how much of the picture is missing that would allow decision making about the use of water to be based upon high veracity scientific knowledge? Which begs the question, why isn't more being done to bring water into the Murray to provide food for the expected growth in population?

Why are you creating an artificial drought on top of a real drought? Why are you are conducting a vivisection in which the aim is exsanguination of rural communities? There are so many questions that I don't know from which to choose to request an answer.

Perhaps this is the best question to ask: *"What is the scientific justification for the rush to implement the MDBA plan in view of the evolutionary robustness and already drought-adapted flora and fauna of the Murray River?"*

Regards,

Dr. Stephen J Tynan PhD MBA

25th January, 2011.