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SC

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Parliament House
Canberra
ACT

Dear Mr Windsor

My husband has a stock feed business in Kyabram Victoria, and thanks to this water plan we can no longer plan for the future, this is the first good year that we have had for so long and now this, we have debt from the drought but the financial crises hit very hard with the drop in milk prices. We employ 12 people but if this goes ahead our gates will close over night, 800 jobs I hear what a joke

There are so many ways to address the water issue I do not understand why you always go after the farmer when Brumby put the pipeline to Melbourne Bendigo and Ballarat and the libs could have stopped this. I read of other countries buying our land to produce food and yet our government are out to destroy food production how stupid are we

Are we missing something is the government intending to sell this water buy back to the highest bidder I wonder as I cannot understand the stupidity of the plan

I'm still waiting for a reply to my last letter
Marilyn Danieli

Marilyn Danieli

GVEG pleased with new funds

The Goulburn Valley Environment Group has welcomed the funding of Stage 2 of the Northern Victorian Irrigation Renewal Project.

Group spokesperson Terry Court said the group was pleased to hear of the Victorian and Commonwealth government support, and believes the water savings will benefit the ailing Murray and Goulburn rivers.

"While the 100 GI of estimated savings to go to the environment is welcome, what is needed is the targeted purchase of water and delivery shares and extinguishment of water-use licences," Mr Court said.

"We must act now to remove the capacity to irrigate land that has been deemed unsuitable for irrigation.

"The Commonwealth water buy-back should be co-ordinated with the NVIRP works to achieve the best water saving outcomes that are required to create healthy rivers and wetlands, a sustainable irrigation industry and vibrant communities."

Mr Court said the group believed the funding was an opportunity to improve water efficiency and productivity, and modernisation should take place on all potential properties.

"Modernisation alone will not deliver healthy rivers, but water buy-backs and modernisation will," he said.

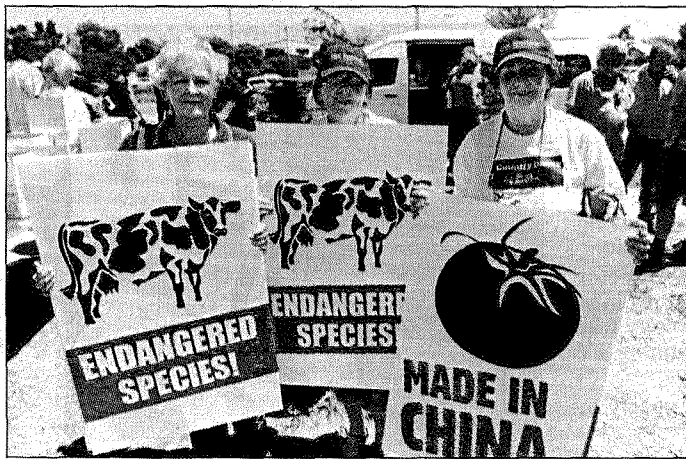
"We must take this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to strengthen the irrigation industry and remove irrigation from areas that are unsuitable for irrigation."

Towns will suffer

The Marsden Jacobs Associates report on the NSW central Murray region, including Finley and Deniliquin, found a reduction in water availability of 40 per cent would result in a major reduction in rice production and associated farm viability.

"There is significant human and financial stress within the region. Many farm businesses have either sold or offered to sell water entitlements to the government as a means of raising funds to meet critical household and business needs," the report said.

"There is a concern amongst community members and local government that some centres would transform from being service centres to become welfare towns."

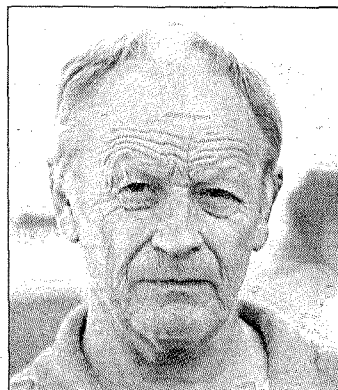


Marilyn Danieli, Sue Moor, Shirley Kuhle, Kyabram . . . We'll take the fight to Canberra for sure. If that's what it takes, we'll do anything. Right now they (government) are not listening.



Stuart Grinter, farmer, Kaarimba . . . What's going on — get real boys. Why don't you just come out and say it straight? You just couldn't give a stuff.

The voices of protest



Paul Nash, Nanneella store owner . . . People have walked through the river in Echuca before. It never used to run all summer. And the NVIRP (second stage) news, that's a bit of a wank; the tender's been out for months — if the money wasn't through how come they've been lining channels in Nanneella?



Mike Taylor, Murray-Darling Basin Authority chairman . . . We are not dying in a ditch to say the science is right.



Federal Member for Murray Sharmar Stone . . . This is the perfect storm. (If the basin plan is implemented) the metros (city dwellers) will clap and cheer, the Greens will say 'well done'.

Quotable quotes from the MDBA's Echuca consultation session and the farmers' protest rally that came with it.



Adam Whipp, contractor, Nanneella . . . There won't be any hay to bale when there's no water. We have five people employed who'll be looking for work.

Plan vote this term

A plan to save the Murray River will be put to a vote during the Federal Government's current term, Prime Minister Julia Gillard says.

In a speech in Adelaide, Ms Gillard said if necessary, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority would be given more time to prepare its final plan after suggesting its original timeline of the end of 2011 might be difficult to achieve.

"If a few extra months mean that we can get a workable solution and restore the river to health, then that is the right way to proceed," she told the Rotary Club of Adelaide.

"That said, whether the plan goes to the parliament at the end of 2011 or the beginning of 2012, I can absolutely state this: the plan will go to this parliament and every member of this parliament will face his or her own reform test."

Ms Gillard said in considering the long-term future of the river and the

plan for water allocations across the basin, the government was committed to achieving the best outcomes for the health of the river, for food production and for the sustainability of regional communities.

"We want a win across that triple bottom line," she said.

Her comments followed several community meetings across NSW, Victoria and South Australia which revealed widespread anger towards the authority's initial proposals.

The government pledged to take community considerations into account and Ms Gillard said ministers would continue to travel along the river to discuss local ideas.

"They will continue to visit communities, engaging with them directly to ensure we understand the concerns as well as the opportunities that communities see in this important reform," she said.

Murky water dims Coalition's pipe policy

By **PETER KER**

CRUCIAL aspects of the Coalition's north-south pipe policy remain unanswered, with Ted Baillieu refusing to reveal the beneficiaries of water that he would stop from flowing to Melbourne.

Mr Baillieu has confirmed that a Coalition government would not allow Melbourne to take water from the pipe unless the city urgently needed supplies for "critical human needs", and only if there was "sufficient" water in the Goulburn region where the pipe sources its flows.

His plan would mean that up to 75 billion litres each year would be up for grabs.

The Coalition was coy yesterday when asked what it would do with the water instead of sending it to Melbourne, with Mr Baillieu's spokesman Simon Troeth saying: "If the water was not used it would stay in the north of Victoria."

When asked if that meant the water would go to farmers or to environmental flows in rivers, he refused to elaborate.

The Coalition policy also has massive ramifications for Melbourne Water, which has contributed \$300 million to irrigation upgrades in northern Victoria in return for getting access to the pipe water.

Environment Victoria spokeswoman Juliet Le Peuvre said the water should be kept in the Goulburn River and returned to help environmental treasures such as the new red gum parks near Echuca.

"The Goulburn River desperately needs a greater share of its own water, as it is in the worst condition of all the rivers in the Murray Darling Basin," she said.

Victorian Farmers Federation spokesman Richard Anderson said the pipe water should be bound by the same rules as irrigators, which would allow Melbourne to store 75 billion litres in Eildon Dam for emergencies, but any extra water that accrued would be surrendered.

"They could carry it over, but eventually, it would spill over into the communal pool," he said.

Water Minister Tim Holding said Melbourne households deserved some returns from their financial investment in the pipe and irrigation improvement projects.

Dams could guarantee the future

THE Echuca protest, ("Basin backlash builds", WT, Nov 10), has made me put pen to paper.

It's not a choice between food and frogs — we need both.

We also need more young people studying ag science and environmental science, as they depend on each other.

We farmers are all environmentalists, probably more so than many of our city cousins.

This goes especially for politicians.

In 1943, I am told, you could walk across any river in south-eastern Australia, as most had stopped flowing.

In those days, there were fewer people and practically no irrigation. The only thing that has kept our rivers running during the worst drought on record is our few dams.

All of our east coast has high rainfall. More than 80 per cent of our high country is locked up for national parks.

Why not use the resource and save our environment and guarantee our food?

Build up to 50 dams in long, deep gullies along the entire length of the Great Divide.

Our environment and rivers could be guaranteed.

Irrigation and water supply for inland towns could be guaranteed. When the next 12-year drought occurs — and it will — just let a few dams go and give our rivers the floods they need every three years.

At present, the national parks are just killing fields for our native flora and fauna.

THE MURRAY DARLING BASIN COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESS HAS BEEN COMPLETED...AND NOW?

MEET THE NEXT
**ENDANGERED
SPECIES**



RURAL COMMUNITIES

BY **GEORGE !**