

# STYLO

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Senate Select Committee on Agriculture and Related Industries  
Food Production in Australia  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**Mataranka NT-Barriers to development**  
**Incorrect data sustainable water report Northern Australia will affect future Food**  
**Production in Northern Australia**

Dear Senators

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present evidence at this enquiry.

The reason I am making a submission is:

1. Data and reports Northern Territory government is relying on is flawed  
"Restricting access to Water"
2. Process of gaining an allocation is awful, seems to be more barriers and disincentives even  
to the extent of asking licence applications to be withdrawn  
"Disincentive to get Water Allocations"
3. Process after gaining a licence has barriers and special conditions are prohibitive.  
"We need encouragement to develop, not barriers"

Thank you very much for your time.

Yours sincerely

*Tina MacFarlane*

Tina MacFarlane  
28<sup>th</sup> September 2009



## Select Senate Committee – Food in Australia

I would like to raise concerns in relation to future food production and development in the Northern Territory.

I am a landholder with 9500 hectares of freehold land at Mataranka. Mataranka is 400km South of Darwin and 1200 km North of Alice Springs.

I am attaching a detailed soil map of our property compiled 2002 (we still own 75% of Stylo) and faxing official minutes of Water Allocation Planning meetings in Mataranka contradicting elements of National report "Water in Northern Australia". I have attached listed page numbers in question of this report.

Mataranka is currently going through a Water Allocation planning process-commenced 12 months ago due for declaration early next year. Information being presented to committee is incorrect as raw data used to calibrate and predict outcomes is incorrect. This same data is incorrect in Northern Australia Sustainable yields project released by CSIRO released in September 2009:

1. Recharge from whole catchment needs to be considered. Groundwater Storage in Roper River Region Page 68 uses Jolly report however this only takes into account south of the Roper River not full catchment area to the north and west (Peter Jolly verified on the phone this report only in relation to "Water Availability from the Aquifer in the Tindall Limestone South of the Roper River") Thus this report is not taking into account full catchment area, all figures appear to be based on Peter Jolly's report 2004.  
See Page 1,2,19
2. Incorrect rainfall figures. All raw rainfall data from gauging stations in Mataranka area before 2000 were manual with huge gaps, we know gauging stations were completely underwater for periods during the wet season and rainfall figures are incorrect.  
See Page 3,4,25
3. Rainfall Graph does not correspond with raw Rainfall data. If correlate to raw data from long term data available, many rainfall periods missing, when estimating these figures from other nearby reliable automatic gauging stations one to the North (Katherine) and one to the South (Larrimah), some figures for Mataranka are substantially less yet Mataranka is in the middle of Katherine and Larrimah.  
See Page 3,4,5,6,25
4. Future Page 90 Application for groundwater 13923ML/Y. Actual figure 28 741ML see minutes from Mataranka Water Meeting in March 2009  
See Page 7,8,9,10
5. Not taking into account recharge to west of Stuart highway yet aquifer unconfined (see soil report above; no rivers, creeks, streams goes straight into aquifer) how can you gauge recharge if not taking into account all catchment. This information was stated by a hydrologist at both a Mataranka Water Allocation Planning Committee meeting and with the Water Controller and Chief Water Project officer in Darwin. " Surface runoff from the catchment on the Sturt Plateau is low and represents less than 5% of Rainfall (yinFoo et al., 2001). Also Attached drilling profile and water capability of bore (return to recovery) of bore drilled 1998  
See Pages 11,12,13,14,15,16
6. RO – 2.4.7 Change in Landuse "Minimal Landuse Change in Mataranka" (page 91) Incorrect, proposed irrigation development 2-3000hectares currently approximately 6-800ha under irrigation  
See Page 21



7. RO – 3.6 River System Water Balance “Mean annual stream flow over the Roper region is estimated to be 14394 Gigalitres.” Page 62. This figure is a little over half the Mean Annual Runoff of 24,300 Gigalitres for the Murray Darling Drainage division with the current developed resource of the Murray Darling being 10 000 Gigalitres. From streamflow figures published in the 2007 National Water Initiative report for the Roper River 2004/5 which was considered a dry year the Roper River Groundwater recharge was 1731 Gigalitres (Significant Groundwater entering the Roper River from unknown springs located in the river bed; Danuta Karp Report No 17/2008D see page 35). This is significant recharge when the Mataranka Water Allocation plan area seems to be at looking at 35,000 to 40,000 megalitres in total for Sustainable use and future development which is less than 2.5% of the total recharge in a dry year (currently requesting 28 500 for current proposed agricultural development with possibly a further 10 000 megalitres for other industries, town water, strategic indigenous reserve and future agricultural development).  
See Page 18,23
8. Using different methodology and time period for Katherine Water Allocation Plan and Mataranka Water Allocation Plan although both in Tindal Aquifer, have similar years of records and river flows. Katherine based on records 1961-2004 which is known to be a wetter period which has publically been declared by the Water Controller and departmental staff as Conservative yet Water Resources are proposing for Mataranka to use the past 108 years, which is both more conservative and incomplete data both of which will reduce the available allocation (See water Allocation area Page 30). According to the Water Controller and water resource staff the Katherine Plan is conservative, so what does that make Mataranka? (See attached Katherine Water Allocation Plan 2009-2019 Page 17 14. Assumptions (iii)).
9. Researchers supplied with incorrect data. As listed above these figures are now being used at a National level. Dr Richard Creswell’s office CSIRO Principal Scientist & team leader for report Water in Northern Australia has been contacted, Dr Creswell is aware of concerns unable to do anything as data has been provided to him by an outside source, this is also the position of the territory government. It appears this is where the entire system breaks down, incorrect or incomplete data provided to researchers.
10. Northern Territory Government requesting withdrawal of licence applications. The Northern Territory Government is requiring all irrigation license applications submitted as far back as 2004 be formally withdrawn before any licenses are issued, appears to be removing all statutory rights and natural justice. The minister said he would provide “written assurance that withdrawn applications will continue to be considered as part of the planning process and will be able to be resubmitted in the same form, at the completion of that planning process” This affects future of agriculture development in North, the livelihood of farmers, and future food production in North Australia.  
See Page 26,27,28,29
11. Restrictive Licence Conditions. Based on the Current Special Conditions being applied in Katherine licences we are worried about the viability of the licence, when and if we receive a licence.  
See Page 35,36

We have gone through the process to try and resolve these issues and are not getting results. We can’t understand why a legitimate water license application is asked to be withdrawn. We have had an application in since 2005 and would like to see incentives for development not the above barriers. We are legitimate developers wanting to get on with production and are seeking support to get on with development.

My husband and I are devoted to agriculture. Lindsay has been on the land and Roper River 47 years, on this property for the past 18 years, his family settling in the region in the 1940’s. The current Northern Territory government appears to be discouraging agricultural development and food production in Northern Australia.

We have access to suitable land, water and are keen to develop. We are seeking your support to remove barriers to our development and let us get on with production.

Thank you for your time.





AUGUST 2009

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

Approved Form 15 (20/07/2009)

LICENCE TO TAKE GROUNDWATER

Pursuant to Section 60 of the *Water Act*

COPY

Licence No: TLA19

<b>Licensee:</b> Ian & Heather Curtis			
<b>Address:</b> PO Box 765, Katherine, NT, 0851			
<b>Expiry Date:</b> 30/04/2019	<b>Water Control District (if applicable):</b>		Daly Roper
<b>Groundwater Resource:</b>	Tindall Limestone (Katherine)	<b>Trading Zone:</b>	Zone 2
<b>Bore(s)</b> RN026357 RN029739 RN031104			
<b>Property(s) on which water to be used:</b> NT Portions 6493, 6496 & 5789, Fox Rd, Katherine			

Beneficial Use	Security Level	Maximum Water Entitlement (ML/Yr)	Trading available?
Agriculture	High	840	Full
Agriculture	Medium	64	Partial
Industry	Medium	63	Partial

Terms

1. The licence holder may take or use up to, but no more than the maximum quantity of groundwater stated as the maximum water entitlement, subject to annual water allocation announcements, if applicable, and the terms and conditions as stated on this licence.
2. The licence is valid until the expiry date stated on the licence subject to terms 3 and 5.
3. The licence may be revoked, suspended or modified at any time by the Controller as provided for in section 93 of the Water Act.
4. The licensee can surrender or apply for modification of the licence at any time.
5. Non use of the water entitlement conferred under this licence may result in full or partial revocation by the Controller.
6. If a Water Allocation Plan (WAP) has been declared for the stated Water Control District under section 22B of the Water Act, the licensed water entitlement may be able to be traded to another person in full or part, permanently or temporarily, subject to WAP rules.
7. Chemical and/or fertiliser injection systems shall not be installed into the pump discharge lines without the prior approval of the Controller of Water Resources.
8. No guarantee is given or implied by this licence that water will be available from the water resource at any given time.

Conditions

1. The water entitlement shown for each beneficial use must be used for no other purpose than that beneficial use, without approval of the Controller of Water Resources.
2. Pumpage for each month from the above listed bore(s) must be recorded by a meter supplied, installed and maintained by the licence holder to the satisfaction of the Controller of Water Resources.
3. The record of pumpage for each month must be supplied to the Controller of Water Resources within two weeks of the end of each reporting period as stated in the specific conditions of this licence.
4. The following specific conditions apply:
  - a) Maximum annual water entitlement from the above listed bore(s) must not be exceeded without prior written approval from the Controller of Water Resources; and no more than 30% of the annual entitlement shall be used in any one month.

COPY

Year	Annual Total (ML)	Total Security <i>LOSS</i>	High Security	Medium Security	Low Security
2009	1357	<i>200</i> 0	840	517	0
2010	1375	<i>182</i> 0	840	535	0
2011	1185	<i>372</i> 0	840	345	0
2012	1237	<i>220</i> 0	840	397	0
2013	1103	<i>454</i> 0	840	263	0
2014	1198	<i>359</i> 0	840	358	0
2015	1126	<i>431</i> 0	840	286	0
2016	1236	<i>321</i> 0	840	396	0
2017	1097	<i>460</i> 0	840	257	0
2018	1233	<i>324</i> 0	840	393	0
2019	1305	<i>252</i> 0	840	465	0

- b) Entitlements traded must only be used in accordance with and after the new licences are granted by the Controller of Water Resources.

I hereby agree to the terms and conditions as stated in this license: (Please tick)

Applicants signature: ..... Date:.....

Controller of Water Resources: *Len Scammell* ..... Date: *26/8/2009*

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