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Inquiry into the Water Amendment (Saving the Goulburn and
Murray Rivers) Bill 2008

SUBMISSION from Edwin Adamson DipAg, MenvSc

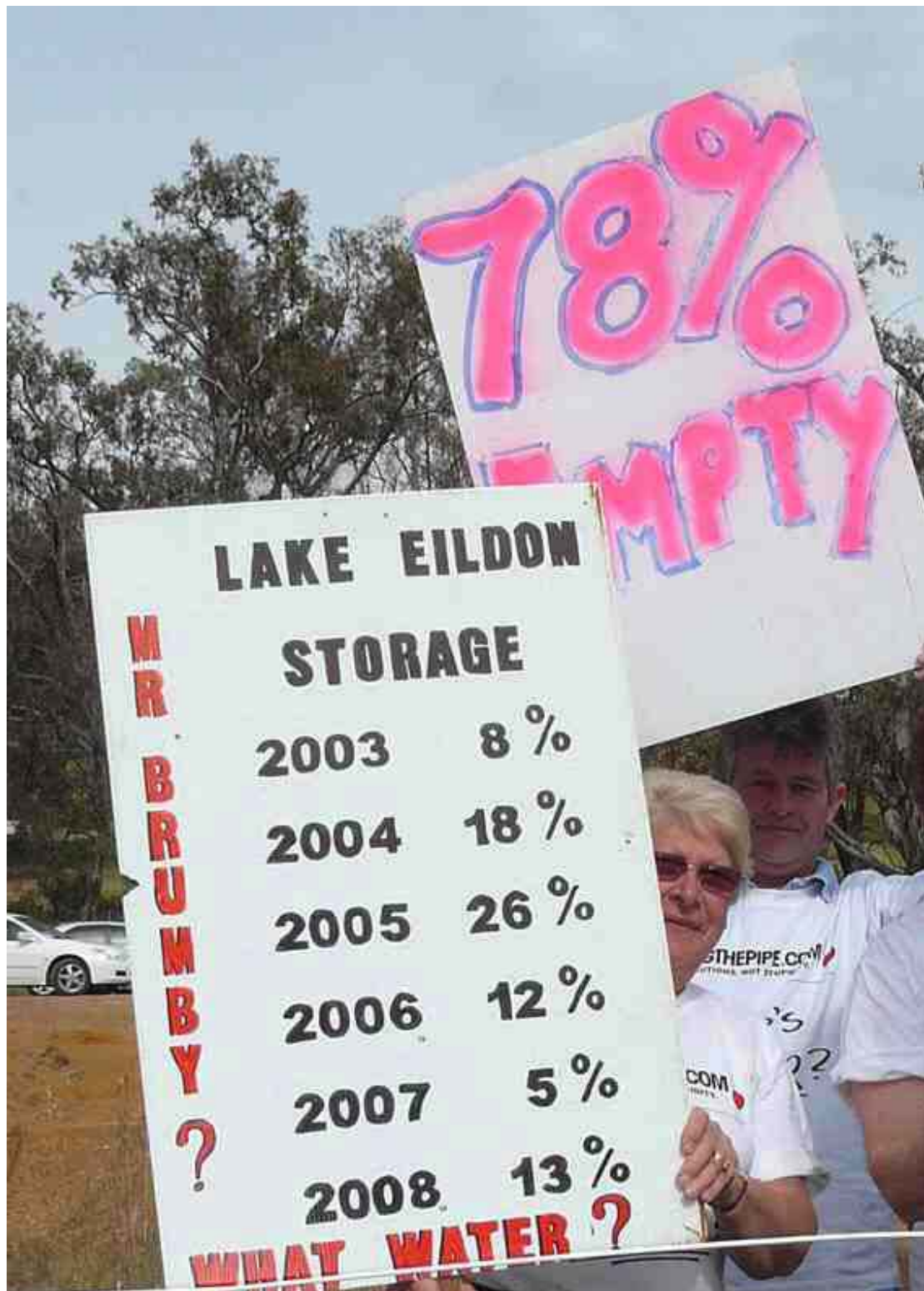
Edwin Adamson is a businessman – consultant - farmer

- 1) Landscape for Life land use planning, assessment and property design service
- 2) An irrigator (First Selection Nursery) whose licenced dams are for only 3 Megalitres of water. He also has a stock and domestic water right from the Delatite River, at the headwaters of the Goulburn River catchment near Mt Buller ski resort.

Edwin agreed to give back to the environment via Goulburn Murray Water, a 40% offset of water from his originally negotiated 5MI in order to help the Murray Darling Basin environment. That was in 1995-96.

This author wonders what happened to that Environmental Water - and the 10MI he also gave back to the Victorian Government some 15 years before that.

Edwin is also a vigorous member of the Plug the Pipe Campaign, and was supposedly “arrested” recently by a Sugarloaf Alliance or Melbourne Water employee on private property to which he, though not the “arrestor” had been invited by the landholder.



Looking at Lake Eildon at Bonnie Doon, as Senator Xenophon and Senator Hanson-Young did several months ago, one is indeed prompted to wonder "Where's the Water?"

There is currently no water under the bridge at Bonnie Doon, and not for some kilometres south towards the Lake wall.

Lake Eildon this week is at 19% capacity with 220 MI per day running into it and 5,000MI per day running out. Irrigators in the Goulburn Scheme have just had what used to be called their "Secure Water" rights available raised to 28% of what they have bought and paid for.



Lake Eildon at Bonnie Doon in February 2008. It's similar now.

Last year irrigators used about 880,000 MI, just over half of what they would usually call their reasonable irrigation allocation of 1,500,000 MI.

Make no mistake about it; the social and economic fabric of the Murray Darling Basin in the Goulburn River tributary of the Murray is suffering markedly at present; including the upper catchment where no flood irrigation takes place.

Here in the Upper Goulburn Catchment, the Mansfield district, for instance, tourism is the life blood of the region and water boosts that tourism incredibly. A boat can still be launched at Lake Eildon, but you have to search diligently to find where.

Tonight I had a call from Richard; no second name. He got my name from the Plug the Pipe website and asked me about

the future of boating on Lake Eildon, because the days of pleasure and plentiful water in his childhood.

He wants his children to enjoy similar things. He knows that Lake Eppalock (near Bendigo) is virtually empty and wants to know if Eildon will be the same. He warns that he will have to take his children elsewhere to boat.



Lake Eildon boat launch area at Gough's Bay, 2008, at about the same level as now.

History records the aims of the original Eildon Dam and those who proposed it's enlargement. They were clear on why it was needed. The aims were primarily:

- 1) to increase regional development in the Goulburn Valley
- 2) to reduce the drift of people, and particularly of youth to the cities, and
- 3) to increase the availability and reliability of water for irrigation

The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, which built Lake Eildon even did the subdivision of land around the Lake to promote tourism. Now, many of the houses are deserted and forlorn; for sale signs fading.

Currently the Victorian Government, it's strategies and policies have everything to do with urban development in the major urban centres of Melbourne and Geelong and little to do with environmental sustainability as the bottom line and regional sustainability as the goal to keep the whole Nation in perspective.

However, in contrast to the Queenslanders, where diversion through the rivers and creeks and creation of massive evaporative basins is common, and where sleeper licences totalling many thousands of ML of water are reportedly about to be impounded and pumped into service there, Victorian farmers are generally less gross in their interference with rivers and streams (except for the Government dams and weirs).

This Bill that the Standing Committee is currently considering seeks to implement measures that this author thoroughly endorses.

The principles of Environmental Sustainability must be met. Principles of Sustainable Catchment Management are part of this, and must be understood and applied.

Continuing improvement in the efficiency of agricultural production is not attained by sending water out of a catchment, especially not out of the Murray Darling Basin.

There is virtually no community, or independent scientific opinion which favours piping water to Melbourne from the Goulburn River at Yea via the North-South (Sugarloaf) pipeline.



1.75 m diameter pipe currently being laid from Yea out of the Murray Darling Basin to Melbourne's Sugarloaf treatment reservoir

At least three public opinion polls in the regional areas of Victoria and at least one including Melbourne TV viewers showed 95% or more against this pipeline.

Continuing drought and Climate change are facts of life in this 21st Century.

WHOLE CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

The benefits of whole catchment management were perceived by people and Governments in Canada and the USA in mid 20th Century, resulting in the formation of Catchment Management Authorities charged by local communities within the catchment and then endorsed in legislation by Government, to look after the land and water resources, including the environment.

In Australia, Ernest (Watershed) Jackson and his colleagues throughout the 9 districts of the Murray Valley League for Development and Conservation lobbied hard to have land managed on the basis of whole catchment principles.

Eventually, NSW committed to the principle, though it struggled with the practise, and continued to over allocate water and bleed the system to death.

The Murray Darling Basin is an inland river system which is in a disastrous state, brought about by

- 1) over-allocation of irrigation water
- 2) continuing drought,
- 3) climate change, and
- 4) now by further steps to take water from it for use elsewhere.

This Bill satisfactorily seeks to bring States into line with a whole of catchment management approach and prevention of deleterious acts.

However, it is hoped that the Senate can get all parties and all States and Territories to either join in fully with whole catchment management and unified laws and regulations, with no exceptions or exemptions, or get the Federal Government to take over all water resources in the Nation.

It's not an outcome I would favour; but we can't go on having one law for the greedy people who care only about today's dollar, and no effective law for the environment and it's critically essential sustainability, which in the end allows we human to inhabit and gain sustenance on this Planet.

EDWIN V C ADAMSON
29/01/09