

“Larrapinta”
Larras Lee NSW 2866
November 30, 2005

The Secretary,
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport,
Parliament House,
Canberra. A.C.T. 2600.

Inquiry into Water Policy Initiatives -- A Submission

This submission particularly addresses the impact on rural water usage of recent water policy across the Queensland/NSW border – Lower Balonne Floodplain, Birrie and Culgoa Rivers. I have made particular reference to *methods of protection for rivers*.

Background

I am a landholder in NSW (affected properties “Teralba”, “Westbend” and Maylands), Brewarrina Shire.

Approximately 3 000 ha of these holdings are along the flood plains of the Birrie (“Teralba”, “Westbend”) and Culgoa (“Maylands) Rivers and have been severely degraded by the lack of flow in the Rivers over the last ten years.

Our last flood was in March 1999. Our last major flood was Sept. 1998.

I am traditionally a grazier and have not activated a cropping license that exists over this country.

The sheep stocking rates have been reduced on this country by some 35%. Cattle can no longer be sustained on this floodplain country.

I estimate that the value of the properties has been downgraded by some 20%.

Problem

Queensland water policy has seen the near death of the Lower Balonne River System in a short span of TEN years.

Suggested Solutions

Water Policy and Management must become a FEDERALLY administered program. Rivers are a NATIONAL resource and do not know state boundaries. It is recognized that this may be a slow process – the sooner the Federal Government begins this process, the sooner it will be completed.

Total extraction from any flow event MUST be limited to a maximum of 30% at all levels of discharge.

A volumetric annual cap must be placed on all water harvesters

Overland flow water being taken by irrigators upstream must be abolished.

An Invitation

In closing, I invite the members of the inquiry to come and view the floodplains in order to take a first hand look at the devastation of the environment and of the people. This is a major factor in coming to understand how urgent the solutions are.

I am happy to provide any further information the Inquiry may seek. I can be contacted as below.

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