

**Brenda,  
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29.11.05.**

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

**Submission by Peter and Pop Petersen of Brenda station on the Culgoa River and its floodplain.**

- Brenda Station, along with other stations along the river, was taken up due to the regularity of flooding. Our records (official recording station for both rainfall and floods for the Met. Bureau since 1872 and 1905 respectively) show that from 1905 to 2005 we have had 111 floods – an average of 1 every 11 months. Major flooding occurs every 7.1 years.
- Our last flood was in March 1999. Our last major flood was Sept. 1998.
- Water storage between St. George and Hebel on the Q/NSW border totals 1.5 million megalitres.
- Mean annual flow of the river past St. George is 1.2 million megalitres. Water is over allocated
- In its submission on the impacts of the development to the end of 2001 compared to pre-development, the Qld DNR found that:
- **“the total flow in the median event at Brenda would be reduced to only 3% of pre-development median event”**. Country is still being developed north of the border so that figure will be further reduced.
- The effects of this has been an economic and environmental disaster as well as having long term emotional ramifications.
- **Economic:**
- Stocking rates have been reduced by 30% for sheep and 45% for cattle due to lack of flooding.
- Viability of living here is becoming a big issue and the ease of selling is also a problem – no one wants a dead floodplain.
- The cost of not receiving the 2004 flood was **\$809,119**. (See attached)
- We have had to fence off 8 km of the river as the Culgoa has silted up so much that it is too boggy to allow stock access. The river is no longer flushed out with floods and will be an on going problem that will require more fencing.
- We built 4 off river storages purely for stock and domestic use as the reliability of the river became a concern. They were put down in 1999/2000 and take a flood to fill them – to date they are still empty.
- Following the failure of our off river storages, we then piped water into these paddocks as an extension of the Gabsi scheme. Unfortunately this work was not eligible for the 60% subsidy in Qld but had the work been in NSW it would have been. Our argument is that because of the extraction from the river upstream, 100% subsidy should have applied.
- Landholder cost for the above - **\$241,699.85**.

- **Environmental:**
- Thousands of acres of dead lignum on the floodplain where we have a 51 km double frontage to the river. Lignum is a protected species providing a wonderful habitat for native fauna and nesting sites for birdlife.
- Hundreds of dead or dying river red gums, coolibah and black wattle
- River silting up is a major problem
- The floodplain must have a flooding regime to supply nutrients to the river to allow fish to breed, food source for water birds enabling them to breed etc. Very few water birds here now on a dying floodplain.
- Dramatic and tragic consequences and we are only seeing the start of the degradation of the floodplain.
- **Emotional:**
- Frustration, anger, depression and sorrow to name just a few of the emotions – many people are feeling pretty desperate. Some want to leave but can't sell.
- Overland flow water being taken by irrigators upstream must be abolished.
- 2004 flood was a major flood in St. George and not a single acre was flooded south of Cubbie – the river was barely three quarters of a banker. We should have had 60,000 acres flooded on past similar flood records.
- Irrigators must take a cut in the amount of water they take.
- A volumetric annual cap must be placed on all water harvesters.
- All pumps must be metred **and** policed.
- No repayment of water for downstream users should be made to irrigators.
- Water **must** be allowed to run through to the Darling River and the Narran Lakes **before** irrigators are permitted to take any water. There have been three consecutive flows released that have not run through but irrigators were storing water out of one of them while landholders on the lower end of the system were, and still are, carting water for stock and bath, toilets etc.. The river still ran in the 1943-46 drought which is the worst ever recorded here.
- The Qld Government is responsible for all of this and no environmental impact studies were done before the issuing of all these licences to ascertain the effect it would have on those downstream. There was no discussion with downstream users at all and no mention since of a financial assistance package for townspeople, stock and domestic users to get water elsewhere.
- We just want water to be **shared** and the floodplain to receive a flooding regime.
- It is a transfer of wealth from a very large area of the floodplain (1.4 million hectares) to a very small irrigation area.
- Water is a national resource and should be controlled federally.

**Peter and Pop Petersen.**

**BRENDA STATION,**  
**GOODOOGA.**  
**2004.**

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.**

Prior to 2000, a release rate of 65,000 megalitres per day from Jack Taylor Weir would have given us 60,000 acres of flooded country including our dryland cultivation.

This year we planted 4,000 acres of wheat and had this country been watered by a flood, the difference would have been significant.  
A full profile of moisture before planting would mean at least 6 bags more to the acre.

The loss to us in \$ terms would be as follows:

2000 tonnes of prime hard wheat @ 14 % protein @ \$180 a tonne.

Nett per tonne of \$150 = \$300,000.

These figures are conservative. Another benefit of flooding is that it gives you the "certainty" of growing a crop.

Likewise our stocking operation also suffered.

For example, we could have run an additional 800 steers for 8 months without anymore rain.

Feb. Purchase 800 steers of 260 kg @ \$2.10 = \$546 +  
Freight= 24  
\$570 each landed Brenda.

Oct. Weight gain of 0.8 kg per day for 240 days  
192 kg +  
260 kg  
452 kg @ \$2.17  
\$980.84 per head  
Less commission 44.10  
Less freight 30.00  
Running costs 9.74  
Less dead and missing (3)  
\$327.00 net profit per head.

Sell 797 head @ \$327 = \$260,619.00 PROFIT.

**AND/OR:**

We could also have purchased 4,000 ewes scanned in lamb to cross bred rams.  
\$70 per head landed Brenda.

Lamb April/May – 90% lambs = 3,600

Sell October 3550 mixed sex lambs.

Average \$80 gross

\$75 nett

Minus \$ 5 running costs

\$70 per head

Profit = \$248,500

Retain the ewes and shear them?

Sell the ewes?

Either of the above would enhance the profit margin.

**With these figures, again conservative, for stock production loss in \$ terms, our total loss could have been as high as \$809,119.00.**

P.W. Petersen.

Manager.