

The Secretary,  
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Inquiry into water management in the Coorong and Lower Lakes

- b. iv The calamitous situation in the area of the Coorong and Lower Lakes can only be addressed by the Federal Government exercising what powers it has to take control of the whole of the Murray Darling Basin, the rivers Murray and Darling and their tributaries. Serious water over-allocation by all four of the states of the Basin, over many years, has resulted in the catastrophic state of Australia's largest river system.

**If one seriously considers current and predicted world food shortages, it is urgent that water and farming experts become empowered to address this issue.**

- 2.
- a.b. The above answers these: current arrangements are totally inadequate.
- c. Ramsar Wetlands are being compromised and will continue to be.  
Buying "entitlements" rather than "water" will not help.
- d. There certainly needs to be a comprehensive water audit: and it was noted that the Director of the Wentworth Group of concerned scientists, Peter Crosier, has said that the Snowy region needs investigation.
- e. no ability: needs a Federal take-over. We saw how Premiers Bracks and Brumby in Victoria thwarted P.M. Howard's attempts to have an Agreement and Mr. Brumby has extracted seriously- unreasonable conditions with the flawed COAG Agreement hurriedly stitched-up in Adelaide this year.
- 1) Attached is an email concerning Cubbie Station in Queensland, which I received recently.

Earlier this year I saw, on television, a Cubbie employee showing the reporter the water they had in a dam, which he said was not full to capacity but would provide 3 years of cotton. If, Page 2, first paragraph, \$3,700 is the price paid for this water, the Federal Government needs to act urgently.

  
Paula Horbelt  
8.9.08





## How Cubbie (and Labor) consumed the Murray Darling

Canberra correspondent Bernard Keane writes:



The extent of the Queensland Government's parochial and profligate attitude to water management continues to attract criticism. Put simply, the Queenslanders couldn't care less about the health of rivers either on their side of the border or beyond. Penny Wong can only wring her hands and sympathise with farmers downstream.

The Queenslanders continue to trot out the line that they take only 5% of water from the Murray-Darling. It's literally correct – that's what they take *out*. It's what they prevent from entering from run-off that is the key – and that is much more. The CSIRO's recent report on Water Availability in the Condamine-Balonne reveals a vast and unsustainably over-allocated system that sees over 50% of water extracted from the Balonne-Culgoa before it reaches NSW.

You don't need to go down into the Darling or further on into the Murray to see the environmental havoc wrought by the Queenslanders. Lightning Ridge station owner and Western Catchment Management Authority chairman Ross Treweeke, who has been battling the Queensland Government's profligate approach to water licensing for decades, told us about thousands of hectares of dead trees on the Culgoa floodplain and a system approaching tipping point. Treweeke said that the comments of Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water's Ross Krebs to *The Australian* said it all. "Krebs complains that run-off 'breaks out into floodplains or alternatively feeds into terminal wetlands resulting in a great loss of this water' -- that sums up the attitude of the Queenslanders – water shouldn't be 'lost' to the environment."

For years, Cubbie Group – the vast cancer on the Balonne-Culgoa which exemplifies all that is wrong with the states' management of water – has maintained that it only extracts 0.2% of Murray-Darling water. Fair Water Use Australia has pointed out that this ignores the bulk of Cubbie's water – from overland flows prevented from entering the Balonne and Culgoa Rivers – and that the 0.2% is based on

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