

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

SUBMISSION . IN CONFIDENCE
.WATER MANAGEMENT IN THE COORONG AND LOWER LAKES.

1.

A. The volume of water which could be provided into the Darling River System to replenish the Lower Lakes and the Coorong is unknown, but has very good potential providing an exhaustive and unhindered Water Audit is carried out..IT HAS LONG BEEN ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT EXPLOITATION OF WATER RESOURCES IN NSW AND QLD IS A SCANDAL OF BOTH EXTRAORDINARY AND TRAGIC PROPORTIONS AND YET NSW ARE STILL FORGING AHEAD WITH THE MOST OBSURD DEVELOPMENTS REF THE WEEKLY TIMES MELBOURNE 3.9.008 PLEASE READ AS IT IS NOT ONLY ACURATE BUT THIS BAD PRACTISE IS VERY DETRIMENTAL TO THE SYSTEM AND WAS SUPPOSODELY CEASED WITH THE CAP IN 1995. THE REPORT IS ACURATE AND FAR TO MUCH TO TYPE ,PLEASE READ AS SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE DONE, THIS PRACTISE IS KILLING THE SYSTEM MORE THAN CLIMATE CHANGE/DROUGHT.

B. i. A possible incentive and compensation scheme for current legitiment water holders who participate in a once off voluntary contribution of water to this national emergency. Should be considered but only from legitiment Holders.

ii.. Alternative options for the acquisition of sufficient Water.

- A. The Menindee Lakes must be Thoroughly looked at as to what contribution can be made. As it must be remembered that a high evaporaton rate exists there over summer as well and some water could possibly be better used for lower down in the system..
- B. Target large private storages in the upper reaches of the system as part of a potential Plan / package ie go Right up the Darling from bottom to the top including Tributories. Of all legitiment holdings
- C. If an exhaustive Water Audit is carried out of all private water Storages ,any that show up that is not legitiment eg water harvesting , unmetered pumping installations, large Dams . etc water should be released and Storages dismantled. THIS IN TURN ALONE WILL INCREASE STREAM FLOW, ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS AND ECO SYSTEMS health , TOGETHER WHEN WE DO HAVE HEAVY RAINS IN THE NORTH AND NORTH EAST OF THE DARLING RIVER SYSTEM MUST CONTRIBUTE FURTHER DOWNSTREAM IF SOME PLUGS ARE PUT BACK AT THE TOP . The Water Audit Must be carried out in Qld as well as NSW. As Water theft particularly on a large scale must be stamped out.Yesterday not tomorrow. As it effects not only stream and environmental flows but the eco systems and River Health Right across the whole of the Basin.Particularly when it is the Geographical position in the

System , where the activities of very large Extraction and Water Harvesting and theft take place that it has devastating effect throughout .

iii. **LIKELY TRANSMISSION LOSSES AND MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO MANAGE DELIVERY OF THIS WATER.**

Depending on the results of the Exhaustive Water Audit and Geographical position and volume of potential supply, would have to be carefully considered in a plan together with proposed time of delivery, as losses will increase as some flows decrease and the weather gets warmer and evaporation increases. Together with stream inspections during transmission and all illegal diversion closed down in order to have nil losses through theft.

iv. **COMMONWEALTH POWERS TO OBTAIN AND DELIVER WATER AND POSSIBLE LEGISLATIVE OR REGULATIVE IMPEDIMENTS.**

Yes Commonwealth Powers should be used to obtain and deliver Water together with some sort of regulative structure over NSW and Qld Re unregulated Water Harvesting together with any large scale Water Harvesting that has been licensed since 1995. NSW MUST BE OVER RULED WITH THEIR FLOODPLAIN POLICY AS THE WHOLE OF THE BASIN IN TURN SUFFERS. WATER MUST BE RETURNED TO THE FLOODPLAIN. AND COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATION PUT IN PLACE, THE NSW PREMIER IS TECHNICALLY INCORRECT WHEN HE SAYS HIS POLICY WILL FIX THE PROBLEM .IT WILL NOT.

Regulations must be brought in that Everyone has a Water Meter ie large or small . The deals that have been struck at COAG about Stock and Domestic Water Systems in QLD NSW and Vic are absurd. A very Grey area and opens up to Water theft on a solid scale. In Vic alone this practice is very rife on Rivers Streams Channels and creeks. Large areas are being watered with this practice all Unmetered. And is shown by the Authorities as System Transmission Losses. Surely the states can be over ruled with this , as This is where that raising the price of water is very uneven when many many people have it supplied free.

v. **ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF BRINGING FORWARD IRRIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING UNDER COAG AGREEMENT TO DELIVER WATER TO SAVE THE COORONG AND LOWER LAKES;**

This is potentially a good idea and should be carefully considered.

c. **THE IMPACT OF ANY WATER BUYBACKS ON RURAL AND REGIONAL COMMUNITIES AND ADELAIDE INCLUDING COMPENSATION AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT**

1. This can be very detrimental in Rural and Regional Communities but we have to get our River System in a healthy situation to have Healthy Towns.. I strongly believe that the following should be part of the plan.

- A To start with Right across the Murray Darling Basin.all water Harvesting structures since 1995 be demolished .
- B All illegal diversion operations be shut down and dismantled.
- C All Rivers, streams ., and Water Authority Channells be checked And anyone diverting Water without a water Meter be closed down .
- D It maybe after appraisal that only certain crops can be grown in the north when water is available.?
- 2 Very Large and large existing Water allocations be targeted for buy back particularly in the Northern areas of the Basin with Commonwealth powers to be evoked to start the clean up. /fix up.
- 3 Any willing sellers of water to be accepted but with over allocation in general right across the basin an adjustment of buyback of maybe 15 % of the field of whats left after the above would also have to be looked at .
- 4 You really have to have items c 1 and c2 above thoroughly investigated before you can look at suggestion c3 above .
- 5 It must be Remembered it is a Huge amount of Water that has been involved with water Harvesting , Water theft , and evaporation with low level storages in the north and to a lesser extent theft in the South with diversions and no Water Meter's.

d Any other related Matters.

1 With items c1 to c3 above would put an enormous amount of Water back into the River system , cost a lot of money , but SHOULD only compensate for the Genuine Water allocations. It would put people out of work in some communities who would have to be looked after , and people back in work in others.But which ever way is chosen it will cost a lot of money ,and it must be remembered that History has shown that During the bad Droughts of the Forty's and 60's the tributories . where the Darling River main channell starts just North of Bourke in NSW EG the Culgoa and Birrie, The Barwon and Bokhara, you still had some stream flow , the basic invertabraties species were their ,trees were healthy. Now with Gross over Extraction by whatever means Steamflow is not getting to the start of the main channel let alone any further.

2 The Murray arm of the system cannot carry the Darling arm of the system with virtually no contribution flow wise from the Darling arm for a no of years. It is very unbalanced .in many ways EG Apart from River flows which is degrading River Health.you have to many people either getting Water for nothing and or paying very little for it, and other people have very little Water and are paying excessive prices for it.

3 Sooner or later someone is going to have to look at where we grow our food as against water availability and water requirements of a crop, together with suitable climatic conditions for that crop.

4 It must be remembered that The Murray Darling Basin is a drainage Basin and we cannot have all these plugs at the upper end allowing very little

Water past for the bottom end The system must be balanced and very very soon .it is as blunt as that.

2. The implications for the long –term sustainable management of the Murray Darling Basin system for inquiry and report by 4 December.

a. THE ADEQUACY OF CURRENT WHOLE OF BASIN GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS UNDER THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ; it would appear business as usual until either 2015 or 2019 with deals for water allocation agreements not expiring until well into the future . There has been no consideration for the Environment , the Health of our River Systems, with Qld and NSW controlling things from the top of the system and not giving any thought about downstream . Then Vic says well in view of that leave the Goulburn River out of any arrangements. No Water Meter's in many areas right across the Basin due to deals. WAKE UP AUSTRALIA WE NEED A TRULY INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY RIGHT ACROSS THE BASIN WITH NO DEALS AND MUST HAVE INTEGRITY FROM TOP TO BOTTOM AND WE MUST REMEMBER WE ARE IN A DRAINAGE BASIN . AND HEALTHY RIVERS MAKE HEALTHY TOWNS. WE NEED ACTION NOW.

B THE ADEQUACY OF CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS IN RELATION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BASIN PLAN AND WATER SHARING ARRANGEMENTS.

1.The implementation plan needs to be brought forward.

ii..The new Murray Darling Basin Authority needs to be truly independent.

iii.. The Water sharing arrangements must be carefully researched and appraised . The system is extremely unbalanced at present, Far to much Water is taken out at the Northern end of the Basin. And the problems blamed on drought and climate change. Due to the Geographic position in the Basin of our Northern areas of NSW and Southern Qld Current arrangements have not worked , and must be changed yesterday not tomorrow. We must fix the problems at the top and this in turn will go a long way to helping fix the problems at the bottom . These two states control the Destiny of much of the health of Environment , The River system , eco systems ,and in turn effect the wider community over a very wide area of the Basin .This is very important that we have Integrity from top to Bottom.

C 1.All Ramsar Wetlands should have adequate Environmental flows

ii. All Ramsar Wetlands must include in their management plans, more periodical inspections in order to better Manage Water theft Vanadalisam etc. but also demolish structures created to enhance water theft.

McQuarie Marshes in NSW is a prime example of shutting eyes to such activities.

D ...THE RISKS TO THE BASIN POSED BY UNREGULATED WATER INTERCEPTION ACTIVITIES AND WATER THEFT.

i. A massive reduction in stream flow of Tributories, creeks ,streams ,, and ultimately our Rivers. And our Rivers Rely on our tributories

- ii. This in turn leads to the degeneration of our Eco Systems , River Health , The environment. And in turn when the Rivers are struggling Towns will struggle.
- iii. When large open plugs operate at the top of a drainage basin Nothing or very little gets through to the bottom and as a consequence the problems are catastrophic. The Drainage Basin Cannot properly operate.
- iv. When the system is deprived like this on such a large scale, Many people suffer as it places extreme stress on the rest of the system , and the weakest links appear to suffer the worst.
- v.. The murray arm cannot support the lower end of the system with little or no contribution from the Darling River arm.
- vi. Our system must be balanced , we managed to recover from severe drought in the 60's as the system was better balance . We must return to that.

E. The National Water Initiative only targets certain sections of the community. It is not fair and square across the Board. The Commonwealth has not successfully combined the states to be on a common footing with integrity from top to bottom..

F.. The adequacy of existing state and territory water and natural resource management and enforcement arrangements requires very urgent appraisal.

i. After the cap on diversions was brought in ,in 1995 , it would appear that was the signal to enhance diversions re water harvesting, in both QLD and NSW, and yet for the average person in Vic you have trouble trying to get a permit to put in a small stock and domestic dam.

ii. It is quite obvious that natural resource Legislation needs to be examined together with the way it is managed with todays current problems.

G. THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE LIKELY FUTURE AVAILABILITY OF WATER. PARTICULARLY IN THE MURRAY DARLING BASIN. WILL DEPEND A LOT ON THE FOLLOWING.

i. What action is taken by Govt's on the unregulated Water Harvesting in the Northern area's of the Basin in Particular.

ii. Water theft.

iii.. Large scale storing of Water in shallow well holding dams in the North in Very High Evaporation Areas.

v. The large and very large Water allocations in the north particularly in very high evaporation areas with low level storages.

vi. As well as the above The over allocation of Water throughout the Murray Darling Basin will need to be cut Back on a % basis per water share/allocation

vii. Crops will have to be appraised by suitability for Water Requirement /area soil type / Evaporation / Megalitre of water per hectare total requirement. For each crop./Geographical area

Water availability as guided by an independent Authority, not just help yourself to what's going past . as the current practice at present in many places.

- viii. The northern area's of the Basin should be under much much scrutiny as Water must be returned to the flood plain ,together with a much more balanced approach .in particular as it is at the top of the system and the bottom of the system needs a drink as well.
- ix. Particularly in the North Stream flow and River Health Environment should come First for awhile in order for the system to start to improve Health wise.
- x. If the Northern Areas are not rigidly controlled the South has no hope We must Balance resources just like any system and this is something that has not been Happening. STREAM FLOW „ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS PLUS WHATS REQUIRED IN THE SOUTH TOGETHER WITH TRANSMISSION LOSSES MUST BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF THE BALANCE GOING FORWARD.

xi AFTER THE DROUGHT IN THE 60'S WHEN IT RAINED THE CULGOA AND THE BARWON PICKED UP IN FLOW AT THE START OF THE DARLING RIVER MAIN CHANNEL, THE WARREGO STARTED TO FLOW, OTHER SMALLER TRIBUTORIES STARTED RUNNING , ECO SYSTEMS AND RIVER HEALTH STARTED TO IMPROVE ,WE DID NOT HAVE THE CURRENT PRACTISES FURTHER UPSTREAM TO HOLT ENVIRONMENTAL AND RIVER HEALTH RECOVERY DOWNSTREAM . SURELY IT IS TIME TO BRING THESE ACTIVITIES UNDER CONTROL AND GIVE THE SYSTEM A FAIR GO AT SOME RECOVERY. IF WE DO NOT CLIMATE CHANGE WILL HAVE DEVASTATING EFFECT ON WATER AVAILABILITY IN A GREATER PART OF THE BASIN.

The writer was raised on the River system and have lived very close to the major Rivers for most of my life . Have been involved with the Irrigation industry for most of my life and Have worked , researched and studied over a very wide area of the Basin including a stint in the North.

Yours Sincerely