



Dear Committee Secretary,

Tony Windsor, MHR, Chair of your committee, suggested that I make this personal submission to the Committee when it was formed. If the idea is validated and adopted, it would 'gain a result for the river', as well as for downstream users, for rural communities, and for Australia's agricultural production. Both your Chair and Minister Burke have already received similar copies of the submission. It deals with how 'new' water may be sourced economically for Victoria, that would allow much of its water allocation to be returned to the Murray.

The submission reads:

"There is an entirely feasible way for Victoria to be able to return most of Greater Melbourne and Geelong's water offtake to the Murray-Darling system, thereby avoiding the savagery of the cuts to water licences proposed by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA). The way is by piping freshwater that currently runs to waste off Tasmania's West coast to Victoria. The way would still allow Tasmania to extract hydroelectric power from the fall of water, prior to sending it to Victoria. The Melbourne Age journalist, Ken Davidson, has been pushing the idea for a long time and has facts to prove the economic viability of the concept. The version I outline here appears to make an even stronger case.

"The idea is that a weir (with fish ladder) would be constructed some kilometres inland and at about 150m elevation on each of the Western Tasmanian rivers of Arthur, Pieman and Gordon. These rivers have a total catchment area of some 10,000km². The region has a runoff of up to 2,000mm, giving a secure supply of around 5-15,000GJ/yr, depending on how the project was implemented and how climate change affects Western Tasmanian rainfall. Virtually all of this water currently runs unused, except for power generation, into the sea. Moreover, by the time most of its potential energy has been extracted, it is at such a low elevation and the Tasmanian mountains are so high, that it would be very costly for the Tasmanians to pump it up into their central farmlands. Besides, they have more convenient water resources to tap for this. The mainland would only take water that was not used effectively for irrigation, industrial or domestic use by Tasmania (use for power generation does not count here, as it does not consume or pollute the water).

"The weirs would have pipes leading from them, possibly along each river bed, to join a mains pipeline running up Tasmania's West coast and across Bass Strait on the seabed, mostly at a depth of 200m, to Port Campbell in Victoria. The Tasmanian head of water might even be sufficient to deliver the water to the mainland unassisted, though pumping might be required to improve delivery when gravity pressure alone were insufficient for the volume being made available. As most of Southwest Victoria is below 150m in elevation, relatively little energy would be required to take the water to Geelong/Melbourne and to towns and newly-irrigated farmlands as far West as Mt Gambier and Casterton. As this Western District region warms up and dries out under global warming, it too might become an irrigated breadbasket like those of Mildura, Goulburn Murray and Riverina regions, instead of just pastureland. Providing a major new source of water to the west of Melbourne would also save considerably on pumping costs from the distant Gippsland and northeastern Victorian dams.

"The project might best be a Commonwealth one, similar to the Snowy Mountains Scheme, with possible equity participation by up to four State Governments (Tas, Vic, NSW and SA). As the water has virtually no other beneficial use, Tasmania should not charge for it, but the TasVic Pipeline Authority (TVPA) would, thereby be able to pay operational costs and any

interest costs decided on the capital, as well as paying its Governmental shareholders a substantial yearly dividend. Alternatively, should it be decided that private enterprise fund the infrastructure investment, then the Future Fund and/or superannuation funds might be natural sources of the funds. Tasmania would get construction, development, long-term maintenance and operational jobs from it. The owners of the relatively small area of land inundated behind each weir would receive generous compensation and the three, Tasmanian regions affected might be offered further infrastructure funding. The modest lakes behind the weirs might well offer fish farming, fishing, sailing and tourist potential.

"As the disturbance to Tasmania of the project would be so little, and the productive, water security and environmental benefits would be so great to Australia as a whole, either the Federal Coalition and/or the Greens might well also regard such a multi-governmental scheme favourably - thereby assuring passage of the legislation. One might use the remaining water buyback funds of around \$1.1b, and the additional ones proposed by the MDBA, to fund some of the cost of the pipeline. The technology to be used is standard engineering practice and the corrosion-resistant steel pipes might well be fabricated in Australia, given the transportation advantage."

Should the Committee need independent, scientific advice on the concept, then either the Wentworth Group of Scientists, ATSE, CSIRO, DSEWP&C or the Chief Scientist's Office may be prepared to offer it, freely. I would hesitate to ask State governments, water authorities, private water suppliers, processors or distributors for early advice, as these often have vested interests in charging high prices for existing or contracted water sources. This concept offers large amounts of secure, new water at what could be low and stable prices.

I am sure that my great-grandfather, Alfred Deakin, would approve of such a concept, as it would complement his and the Chaffey brothers' great, Murray irrigation works.

Kind regards,
Sev

Sev Clarke