



20/11/10

Dear Susan ,

We are writing to you so that you will please consider our concerns. We are third generation irrigation farmers in our district and want to remain so in the future. We are very concerned for the future rural Australian communities and Australian agriculture, as well as our beautiful environment. We have received information regarding the "Murray Darling Basin Guide to the proposed Basin Plan" (The Guide) which gives us no confidence in *The Guide* or the processes that have been undertaken in the preparation of that guide.

We believe that currently, the *Water Act* does not address the triple-bottom line, which is outlined by the National Water Initiative, the basis of the *Water Act*. It is heavily weighted in favour of the environment, and a true balance between the environmental, economic and social aspects needs to be attained. To this end we ask

that the *Water Act 2007* is reviewed and amendments made, with a view to making it more fair and equitable to all communities in the Murray Darling Basin, and compliant with the National Water Initiatives' triple-bottom line approach, treating the social, economic and environmental aspects of the Basin equally.

We ask that the inquiries currently being held and any future "Plans" that may be composed, be advised to take into consideration the following factors:

- The socio-economic factors that will affect rural communities brought about by any plan once adopted;
- Water that has already been taken or purchased from the MDB – for example the National Water Initiative, Water for Rivers, State Government purchases and the Living Murray initiative, amongst others;
- The Parliamentary and Senate inquiries should look at water management from a holistic perspective, not simply water for the environment;
 - Initiatives beyond taking water from food production should be fully investigated; for example, upgrades of depression era water infrastructure, on-farm efficiency projects, storm water reclamation, additional dams to take advantage of rainfall such as recently experienced, the list is long and the studies are exhaustive;
- The significance of domestic food security and the future needs for food;
- The wellbeing and continuation of one of Australia's major export industries;
- The Governance of the environmental water that is "saved";
- That any Government money that is allocated as recompense goes to infrastructure and socio-economic development, before going to water buy backs, to ensure that the best outcomes for rural communities can be met.

- **We strongly believe that the “local knowledge” of rural communities, is actively sought and engaged across all matters of the Basin Plan, to deliver an outcome that considers all aspects of the issues, to deliver a truly independent report.**

Susan, we elect our Politicians with the expectation that they will do what is right for ALL Australians and we would like you to give our concerns to the Hon Tony Burke on our behalf. We want a balanced decision for everyone.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Hawkins and Michael Hawkins