

Submission No. 11
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Dear Sir,

I write to you today concerning the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

My father-in-law was granted a soldier settler block and moved to this area in 1956. Over the years the introduction of irrigation allowed him and subsequently three of his sons to make a living producing food such as wheat, barley, oats and rice as well as animal production. Now our two sons are hoping to make a career in farming. If the Murray Darling Basin Plan is adopted, they will be denied this chance. Put simply, we cannot survive with cuts to our water allocation of over 40%.

It would be a tragedy if we have just managed to remain on the land after the prolonged drought, albeit with a vastly increased debt, only to be dealt the final blow by government policy.

The number of small family farms in this area has decreased drastically in the 27 years that I have been living here. Corporate agriculture has taken over, with skeleton staff and the bottom line being returns to shareholders. These corporations have no love of the land they farm and are not farming with the aim of nurturing the land for future generations of farmers as family farms are. Country towns are dying as farmers leave and the whole social fabric of life in rural areas is unravelling. **Is this what you want for our future? Family farms consigned to the history books?** Because I can assure you that this will be the result if the MDB Plan is adopted.

I urge you to consider other means of reducing water usage such as piping water and also how to better use the 60% of river capacity that is already allocated to environmental flows.

Farmers only want to be given the opportunity to continue producing cheap, good quality food for consumers. Please don't consign farmers to the history books. The future of agriculture in the MDB is in your hands.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Star