

Mr Tony Windsor MP,
Independent Member for New England,
Chairman Fed. Parl. Com. into impact of water cuts,
PO Box 963,
TAMWORTH NSW 2340.
Fax 02 6761 3380.

Eric Heidecker PhD(Geology),
Retired Senior Lect. (Applied Geol, Uof Q),

23rd November 2011.

RECEIVED
26 NOV 2010

RE: A Submission to the Federal Parliamentary Enquiry into the Impact of Water Cuts on Communities in the Murray-Darling Basin.

Please place before the Committee this proposal for a submission, outlined below, suggesting a strategy that could benefit catchment communities as well as irrigators and river stakeholders further downstream. This proposed submission would be very much to the point, but even so entailing quite a bit of preparation. Thus I would appreciate advice from the Committee that a submission of the following type could be considered:

Productive management of sulphate salinity & colloids induced by geoclimatic factors.

The Problem.

Sulphate salinity is already a matter for concern along channels of the Murray-Darling System. Colloid dispersal is also likely to be favoured by geoclimatic processes attending drought-fire-flood cycles. Colloids could then add to the costs and effectiveness of water-efficient irrigation and treatment of water supplies for both local regional communities and cities downstream.

Planning Recommendations.

1. That current best practice agriculture be maintained.

A simple focus on seasonal environmental flows at the expense of best-practice agriculture could be counterproductive if channels were to receive increased burdens of sulphate leachates and colloids as a consequence. Best-practice agricultural lands retain nutrients, including sulphate, as well as colloids. This is particularly so if fringed by filter landscapes.

2. That Planning facilitate use, development, & adaption of sustainable (productive, multi-purpose) filter landscapes. Regional and riparian communities should be brought on side by allowing filter landscapes that benefit climate management and human health (as illustrated about Charters Towers, see below).

Illustrating the benefits of filter landscaping.

Planning could illustrate as well as facilitate filter landscaping, Illustrative examples are provided by:

1. The Murray-Darling Basin.

Irrigation areas illustrate sulphate and colloid retention. The future consequences of abandoning agricultural management may already be evident. Well-known examples of filter landscaping in catchment rangelands also illustrate soil-carbon benefits.

2. Kennedy District, north Queensland.

The large, affluent mining community of Charters Towers initiated a multi-benefit system of filter landscaping more than 120 years ago. This system has benefitted management of sulphate leachates, nutrients, colloids, mosquitoes (relevant to the Murray Valley), dust, solar radiation, heat, and water parasites. Graziers associated with the City extended filter landscaping upstream for fish habitats & water supplies. Filter landscapes in coastal parts of Kennedy District have been established about the margins of cane fields & banana plantations.

Cc Bob Katter MP.

Eric Heidecker,
"Dalrymple Gardens" via Charters Towers.