



To:
Tony Windsor
Chairman House of Representatives Standing Committee
Inquiry re. Murray Darling Basin Plan

ra.reps@aph.gov.au

Guide to the Proposed Basin Plan – Volume 1

We are actively involved in farming in the Kiewa Valley and are very concerned with some of the recommendations proposed by the Murray Darling Basin Authority. The Guide does not address the social and economic consequences of the proposed Sustainable Diversion Limits(SDL)

Kiewa Valley farmers including dairyfarmers provide employment to many people and efficiently produce milk and other produce for human needs. Many of these farmers, ourselves included, have been dependant on irrigation water to assist in this production.

We have invested at considerable cost in infrastructure to provide efficient use of the water and so make the best use of this resource – unlike other areas which have ageing and costly infrastructures maintained by water boards. Also there is little loss of water through evaporation and seepage. This would indicate that irrigation and production should be encouraged in the Kiewa Catchment as this is where the most efficient use of our precious water resources could be made.

In the Kiewa system 98% of the pristine water is flowing into the Murray as environmental flow so it seems ludicrous to cut so deeply into the remaining 2% that is so useful to the community – in employment, production and sustainability of farmland. The VFF submission has calculated that SDLs targeting irrigators would be close to a 60% reduction in entitlements, given that towns are not likely to be included. This will have a huge economic impact on operations for irrigators and will discourage our sons and other young people from looking to have a future in the dairying industry in this valley.

Having sustainable and profitable farming operations enables farmers to invest part of their profits into helping to protect the environment eg. fencing of gullies, treeplanting, stockwater troughs. This has a direct impact on water quality in the streams. We have been actively involved in projects like these.

It is important that water for the environment is used efficiently and does actually benefit the environment.

Our valley is in a bushfire prone zone. The community relies on the green areas produced by irrigated pastures to provide fire and shelter belts for people and stock. Are sleeper and dozer entitlements included in the SDL?

How does the Authority plan to buy the water if there are not enough people willing to sell?

Yours Faithfully

David and Margaret Holloway