

# Mark Coulton MP

Federal Member for Parkes

15 December 2010

Submission No: 257

Date Received: 16/12/2010

Secretary: SL

Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on  
Regional Australia  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
AUSTRALIA

Dear Sir

I write asking your committee to give serious consideration to the impact of the proposed Basin Plan on communities in the Parkes electorate.

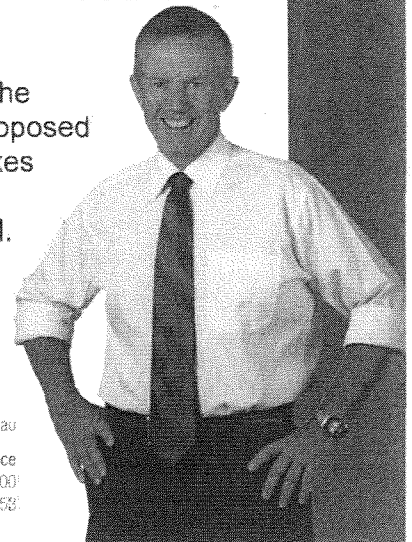
I am a Federal Member of Parliament with an electorate entirely within the Murray Darling Basin in Northern and Western NSW. I am also a former farmer, and I am proud that my family has been living and farming in the Murray-Darling Basin for well over 100 years. My grandfather moved from the Namoi Valley to the Gwydir Valley just after the turn of the last century. Over that period of time we've experienced the abundance of the good seasons and we've lived through the hardship of drought.

The last years have without doubt been some of the toughest, with much of the Murray-Darling Basin decimated by a debilitating 10 year drought. Dams, bores, creeks and rivers dried up, depriving farmers and communities of their lifeblood.

However, lately things have been improving and the recovery of the Murray-Darling Basin in recent months has been nothing short of incredible. If you were to drive around the Murray-Darling Basin today you would see an abundance of pasture and great crops, with rivers flowing at the top of the banks, and the dams nearing capacity. Ironically, in the last few weeks there has been too much rain and many areas of the Basin are now in flood.

While the river system itself has been quick to return to health following the drought, the recovery of the economy will take more time. While the future looks promising, it will take a number of strong annual returns for farmers and communities to consider themselves 'in the clear'.

The absolute last thing these farmers and communities need is the imposition of a Government induced artificial drought through proposed cuts to water allocations. The tight-knit communities in the Parkes electorate that rely heavily on the Murray-Darling Basin for their survival simply cannot endure the cuts that have been proposed.



mark.coulton.mp@aph.gov.au

www.markcoulton.com.au

Dubbo Electorate Office  
Suite 3, 153 Brisbane Street, Dubbo NSW 2830  
ph 02 6882 0999 fax 02 6882 9935

Moree Electorate Office  
69 Heber Street, Moree NSW 2400  
ph 02 6751 1251 fax 02 6751 1251

THE NATIONALS for Regional Australia

# Mark Coulton MP

Federal Member for Parkes

In these towns, water is the most important asset. As water allocations decrease, so will the population in communities. As families are forced to move due to the lack of work available, small businesses, schools and hospitals will close. The future of many regional communities across the Parkes electorate will be under serious threat.

It is extremely important that all recommendations made by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) consider the environmental, social and economic impacts equally. It is just as important to ensure communities get the water they need as it is to ensure our rivers are healthy for generations to come.

Given that the Parkes electorate covers some 250,000 square kilometres of the Basin in NSW, I would strongly suggest that you visit my electorate as part of your inquiry. I think it would be of great benefit for your members to see firsthand the improvements in water efficiency and technology in the Gwydir Valley, the management of the Macquarie Marshes and the Gwydir Wetlands, and the Trangie/Nevertire irrigation scheme.

Your committee will be able to see that our farmers and irrigators are among the best in the world and many already have incredible on-farm water saving measures. Your committee will be able to see what infrastructure is already in place, what more needs to be done and hear what the impact will be on local communities if the proposed cuts go ahead.

I believe that no inquiry into the impact of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan in Regional Australia would be complete without a visit to the Parkes electorate. I note that you have already scheduled visits to Southern NSW as part of your inquiry, and strongly suggest you visit the Northern and Western NSW communities in the Basin as well.

I would be happy to assist you with preparing an itinerary should a visit be possible.

Yours sincerely

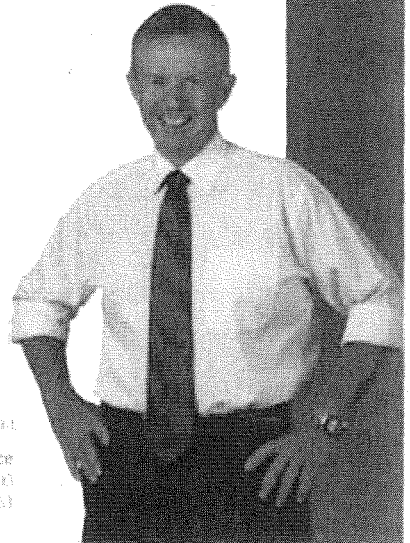
**MARK COULTON**  
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR PARKES

[www.markcoultonmp.org.au](http://www.markcoultonmp.org.au)

[www.markcoulton.com.au](http://www.markcoulton.com.au)

Dubbo Electorate Office  
Suite 3, 155 Brisbane Street, Dubbo NSW 2880  
ph 02 8492 0898 fax 02 8492 1930

Morago Electorate Office  
55 Water Street, Morago NSW 2400  
ph 02 6784 1264 fax 02 6784 1263



**THE NATIONALS** for Regional Australia