

# QUAMBONE PASTORAL CO



14<sup>th</sup> December 2010

The Secretary for the Committee on Regional Australia  
Murray- Darling Basin Plan  
House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Members of the Committee

**RE: INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF THE MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA**

I am writing to you in support of the Murray Darling Basin guide and in particular the Macquarie section of the plan and the returning of water to the lower Macquarie Floodplain including the Macquarie Marshes.

Any returning of water after the calculated mismanagement of the NSW bureaucracy has to be congratulated.

I would encourage more than the bare minimum to be returned to the river for many reasons, some of which I will list below: -

- A.
  - 1) The end of system flows is not being measured accurately
  - 2) Some streams are not being measured at all, e.g., Mullons Swamp, Ginghet, and Marthaguy Creeks.
- B. The Macquarie River has the most winter rainfall dominant catchment for the Darling River and thus its flow should be anticyclical to the summer dominant rainfall areas of the Darling.
- C. Evaporation is bureaucratically believed to be bad but in its natural place, i.e. floodplains it is essential for if you do not have moisture you do not have evaporation, and if you do not have evaporation you will not have clouds and if you do not have clouds you will not have rainfall. If you require any evidence we have just had ten years of drought.
- D. The economic loss being caused by the lack of water over the last ten years. Our business (beef production) alone could easily be 2 – 3 million GROSS per year, of which most is spent on expenses in the business such as cattle purchases, cartage, fodder crop expenses, feedlot expenses and employment ,with increased water returned to the floodplain this opportunity will return.
- E. The social (community) loss after the last 15 years has decreased employment, the loss of one shop, one Post Office, one Bush Nurse, health centre, one fuel distributor, one shearing contractor

business, and one takeaway alcohol outlet. We had three teachers at the school, we now are looking at only having one. The more water that is returned to the Macquarie, the more opportunity will be returned to our community.

As you can understand, the Macquarie Floodplain is very complicated and for you to get a broader understanding I suggest a meeting with marsh landholders and their community.

### **Suggestions for solutions**

1. Supplementary water should be stopped
2. Irrigation water should only be out of Burrendong Dam, not downstream tributaries.
3. Irrigation water should not be able to be rejected without being debited to their water account.
4. Macquarie Valley irrigators received special treatment when water entitlement was changed from acres to megalitres. This should be reversed to maintain consistency throughout New South Wales.
5. Cotton production is the most preferred irrigated crop in the Macquarie Valley. A study of the best growing location, i.e.; soil temperature, rainfall, humidity, daylight hours etc from the plant's perspective, and then moving irrigation to that location may improve productivity, water efficiency, profitability and community outcomes.

Once again, I encourage you to come to the Macquarie Floodplain.

Yours faithfully

Dugald Bucknell  
Managing Director  
Quambone Pastoral Co. Pty Ltd