



17th December, 2010

The Hon Tony Windsor
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

I, Peter Cremasco make this submission to the House of Representative Inquiry into the Impact of the Murray Darling Basin Plan in Regional Australia.

My family has been farming within the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area for over fifty years. We have built up a diversity farming enterprise over many years of hard work. Our enterprises include prune and wine grape production, to a large area irrigation farm that grows rice and prime lambs and recently the family purchased a dry land farm.

The back bone of our farming enterprise is irrigation; it has enabled our family to build a farming enterprise that can endure the many variables of farming life and there are many. We have just this year had our grapes destroyed by disease caused by too much rain. The same rain has downgraded our cereal harvest to about sixty per cent of what we estimated.

But farming also has an upside, it has also allowed my wife and I to educate our children, it has allowed my son to return to the farm, we employ staff and contractors. They rely on our farming enterprise to put money into their households. So the multiplying effect of the farming dollar is at least ten-fold.

We have over many years purchased many hundreds of thousands of dollars', possibly millions of dollars' worth of machinery and auxiliary products. Through the machinery dealers, car dealers and other business houses both in Yenda and Griffith.

With the reduction in water that the MDBA is proposing, will decimate my farming enterprises. Cuts up to 43% will leave us with a huge headache. How do you build a farming business up; to have, almost overnight, our "net wealth" ruined? We are farmer's that's all we know.

In our irrigation enterprises we have spent millions of dollars, lasering farms, installing high – tech irrigation system, recycling watering systems, all to improve efficiency of our irrigation water. We do not waste a drop of water, it is too precious.

So why can't the efficiency we use in our farming operations, be the same as the efficiency applied to the river system? The answer is yes! It should be! There are numerous solutions to providing water to the environment, but taking that water of the farmers is the easy one.

The computer modelling of the Murrumbidgee River should be given priority. This will allow water to be better timed in its delivery, improve flow release and environmental watering of assets. This is Water for Rivers project, which estimates a return or a decrease in the overall water usage of four to five per cent of the total outflows from both dams. That is an incredible saving.

Water buybacks are a waste of government money. It is only forcing the issue of the "Swiss cheese effect" of unusable or stranded assets and delivers the other farmers, higher fixed charges for all other irrigators.

Please consider the implications of the Guide to the proposed Basin Plan, to the famers, his family, his neighbours, the businesses and the wider community.

Regards

Peter Cremasco