

14 December 2010

**Mr Tony Windsor M P
Chairman
The House of Representative
Regional Australian Committee
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600**

Submission No:	367	RECEIVED
Date Received:	10/1/11	10 JAN 2011
Secretary:	Sc	

Dear Sir:

I am writing in response to the Murray Darling Basin Authority proposed Basin Plan.

The Plan presented by the Chairman Mr M Taylor and CEO Mr R Freeman at Renmark SA lacked any credibility particularly if you have a family farm dependent on irrigation.

In my opinion, the plan has no balance between the social and economic impacts to communities, irrigators' livelihoods and the environment.

State Government water policy over some decades allowed water allocations to be handed out indiscriminately.

Federal Government policies allowed managed investment schemes to flourish when the states agreed to separate water from the land to create water trading between the Basin.

Irrigators in South Australia's Riverland had a permanent water licence to irrigate permanent plantings.

During the 1990's the Riverland upgraded its water infrastructure from open channels to pipeline. This was a Federal/State and grower investment. It enabled the region to prosper with less water due to drip irrigation.

However, water savings instead of being left in the river, were exploited by our State Government to expand irrigation downstream.

The proposed Plan agenda appears to reduce irrigation diversions without fair compensation to farmers. The Plan promotes the buy back of water without firstly looking at water savings within the basin due to evaporation and seepage:-

- The basin on average receives approximately 12,000 GIG inflow annually;
- South Australia receives about 7% of this with a cap of 1,850 GIG.

To improve the efficiency of water diversions the following points are outlined:-

- Reduce evaporation and seepage by upgrading infrastructure;
- Relocate pumps back to the main stream;
- All water diversions be metered at the main source;
- Reduce the incentive to flood irrigate;
- Build a new lock at Wellington SA to improve the quality of the river by better managing the system;
- Allow salt water to shandy the Lower Lakes so it can remain an estuarine water way;
- Reduce the size of the Lower Lakes in South Australia;
- Dredge the main river channel for boating;
- Environmental flows should be strictly managed to meet a wetting and drying policy to save water logging, increase native fish population and save the wet lands:

The Murray Basin over the years has been a haven for parochial political expediency. The river's waterways through history have been diverted for votes, divided for political favours and when in drought State/Federal Governments have no cohesion to fix up the world renowned waterway.

Yours faithfully

Malcolm Hill