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Tony Windsor  
Chairman of the House of Representatives Regional Australia Committee  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra 2600

Dear Sir,

In answer to your request for comments on my thoughts on the future of the Murray-Darling Basin I would like to make a few comments. The first publicity campaign based on consideration of only ecological demands was neither fair nor reasonable. If the Greens get their way Australian agriculture would be ruined. Ecology is their religion.

The first MDB study on a shortfall of water in the MDB was based on ecological needs only. It would stuff the whole rural economy in the MDB area. I could not believe this was happening in Australia. But, as I said, it is their very powerful religion

I would like to point out that if the man-made barrages at the end of the Murray were opened and the bypass of water from the Darling River into the Menindee Lakes was closed over half of the water that was stolen by the study would be returned. I presume the water that Penny Wong bought in the last few years will be included in this project.

In 1961 my wife and I with six children moved to Australia. We were vwey strongly encouraged in our thoughts of buying and developing land for the irrigation of cotton. At that time the three year old Keepit dam was full with water running over the spillway. It was referred to by the media as a "white elephant" and "a serious blunder made by those in power" The word "ecology" was never mentioned. We were told that the dam was built to furnish a long term water supply for the local communities and for irrigated farming. In 1961 those who wished to irrigate had to do all of their own development including the installation of pipes under the roads. The government had run out of money.

I object very strongly to the Greens with government support painting the farmer as one who could just as well be eliminated from the scene in favour of ecology. Where were they in 1961? This is certainly not the Australia I was coming to. By what right should I now be displaced?

Another thing I do not understand is how a large project such as the development of the Murray-darling Basin can be allowed to be based on a study of water usage for the ecology only. Who will benefit from the frogs and birds when the people involved in agriculture and its related businesses and population are gone? The long delay in setting up the program and its possible consequences is even now causing those possibly involved to consider their options. Long term planning is necessary.

We desperately need a balanced and practical approach to a water distribution plan.

Sincerely yours,

Paul D. Kahl, AM MBE