

Submission to Committee on Regional Australia
Re the MDBA plan

From Brian Sainty

Subject : Equality ???

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MDBA plan has as a core aim, to give water flow back to the Murray Darling [MD] river system to restore river and wet land health. This water is to be sourced by cut backs in human diversions from the river for agricultural, commercial , and urban use.

Why just the MD? It isn't the river system most in need of remedial action. The sickest river, in the most need of help, is the Hawkesbury / Nepean river system, east of the Great Divide. The HN system is substantial , covering a large area with around 23,000km of tributary streams flowing into Broken Bay.

It is controlled by many dams and reservoirs, and by far the biggest diverter / user is the Greater Sydney metropolis. The water is used for the industrial, commercial, agricultural and urban life of Greater Sydney.

The health of the HN river, in the words of competent river biologists, is that it is as sick as the Yangtse river in China. Some say even worse, as the Yangtse actually flows near its end , where the HN hardly flows down stream from Penrith.

What plans are there in place to cut the human diversions from the HN river system, so as to save it from an irreversible state ? According to NSW Gov't sources , NONE. In fact , due to the anticipated growth of Sydney in the Penrith area , water quantities taken from the HN will be INCREASED.

When , professional biologists / ecologists have raised their concerns over this, they have been told " don't go down that track, don't ask that question". Apparently the social, and economic consequences of a reduction of water supply to Greater Sydney would be totally unacceptable to the people of Sydney .Such dire consequences include , curtailment of growth, loss of some commercial and agricultural enterprises leading to job losses .Something the State Govt [read Sydney] would not accept.

This brings me back to the MIA, and its impending water losses if the current MDBA plan is activated. The MIA, having irrigation as its root source of life wont have " curtailment of growth" to worry about ,it will die a slow death. Not only will the trees, vines , parks and private gardens die, but the spirit and vitality of the people left [those who cant afford to leave] will be so shattered any hope for the future they hold ,will be neutralised.

I wonder how Sydneysiders and the State Govt would consider that outcome for Greater Sydney.

I thought , innocently, that as Australians, we were all equal. Obviously some are more equal than others.