

Submission No:	384
Date Received:	12-1-11
Secretary:	Sc

The Murray Darling Basin problems exist because for the past forty years successive governments have failed to construct any new storage dams on our river systems to cater for the enormous water needs of some fifteen million extra people who now live here. Throw a ten year period of drought into the equation and is it any wonder we ran into such a serious situation. The entire current thinking about the basin and the government attempts to solve it's problems are just like a dog chasing his own tail and are equally as unproductive. The existing water storage systems were designed to support a population of ten to twelve million people, but we have now doubled that number and it is rapidly growing so the only possible solution is to build more storage dams ASAP. The 2007 Water Act must be repealed and a new one put in place which has written into it the immediate building of more storage dams and that these dams be designated for urban use, environmental use and irrigation, in equal proportions. The present Basin plan must be scrapped and the irrigation industry, which has been getting crucified for the past ten years, left alone for a while. Since irrigation accounts for less than 20% of the water in the system, let the Basin Authority look into the other 80+% of water usage and impose the same draconian restrictions on this section as they have done to irrigation. The building of more storage dams will, almost certainly, be violently opposed by the anti irrigation lobby and other mentally retarded groups and concerns for the environment will be prominent in their protests. It is an undisputable fact that we must protect the environment as well as we possibly can, but with Australia supporting more than twenty times the number of people who used to live here, there is no known way we can survive without having an impact on it. There are suitable dam sites all over Australia and a relevant one is the Clarence River in northern NSW. Dams on it's headwaters would provide water for both the eastern and western sides of the dividing range and supply a very useful amount of hydroelectric power. Had this scheme been in place in 2009 the Darling and lower Murray would have been running strongly all year instead of being almost dry and a substantial part of the hundreds of millions of dollars of North Coast flood damage would have been avoided. The building of dams will significantly boost Australia's economy, provide hundreds of thousands of permanent, productive jobs and provide security for our grandchildren and great grandchildren. So, before the next drought comes along, let us get busy and build them and take Australia forward, to quote the words we were bombarded with before the last election.