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Submission to the Standing Committee on Regional Australia on
the proposed Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

From Shirley Booth Senior Citizen of Bourke,
Also Secretary/Publicity Officer, Bourke & District
Garden Club Inc

During all the meetings and debate of the proposed Murray-Darling
Basin Plan very little if anything has been mentioned regarding
the Senior Citizens in the small towns along the Darling River.

Senior Citizens used to be in the minority, but not now, we
deserve consideration.

Most have lived all their lives in outback towns and have worked
hard and riased families, have bought homes with the idea that
at least there will be something to leave to their families.
Now if the proposed plan goes ahead and the water allocations
reduced what will happen?

People will move from the town to seek employment, better education
for their children and of course Bourke will no longer be
an attractive place to live - Who will want the houses now?
The properties, so hard to come by, will be worthless, noone
will want to buy them.

The affect on the health of these seniors - Peter Crothers will
have mentioned in his submission, the stress, depression,
loss of independence etc will take such a toll.

HEALTH - Seniors living out here are pretty hardy people, they
have had to be, but take away the water and we would lose so
many services that we now rely on in "old age". We are so
lucky at present with the new Hospital, Doctors, Nurses and
so many visiting specialists, we would lose a lot of these
services.

Travel to Dubbo, Sydney and soon Orange will be the norm rather
than the exception at the moment. Travel for seniors is not
a lot of fun, those that have family usually can travel by car
but it means people taking time off work and disruption of more
than one household. Those that do not have family travel by
coach and train, up to 10 hours to Sydney for treatment for some
diseases. At least they are able to come back to the Hospital
here for interim treatment. If we lose the water, we will have
all these services downgraded. What will happen?

The Government prefers that Seniors live in their own homes rather
than Hostel or Nursing Homes, Will that be an option our here,
I doubt it very much, which means that again families will be
split with seniors having to go to other towns, hours away to
be looked after. The prospect is very frightening.

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Another aspect that will affect on seniors and all the population of the town of Bourke is the reduction in water that will be available for watering parks and gardens and private gardens.

Gardening is known for its thereapeutic help in maintaining good health, it is not only nice to have Bourke as an Oasis with the green footpaths, but it is also known for its lovely gardens which are shown off to tourists and on display for a Garden Competition each year.

Bourke is known for its Roses and native plants as well as many other lovely flowers and trees. Also, there are a lot of vegies grown for the market and also in backyards. With the cost of fresh fruit and vegies going up because of the Qld and Vic floods it will become more important for people to grow their own.

Without the water, Bourke will become a dust bowl, The health of people will suffer, it will be like lviing in the 1800's and early 1900's. We don't want that, we would like our town to be progressive not regressive, but without the river, which gives us so much eg food, recreation, irrigation, gardens and so much more we will have nothing.

The people making the decision, which includes the Committee, may have little understanding of our lifestyle, the freedom, the relaxed, laidback way of doing thngs, but still accomplishing so much. We have not neglected the river we have seen the irrigators self regulate, but DO PEOPLE WHO MAKE THESE DECISIONS REALLY CARE?

Hopefully, the Committee will see sense and consider all the aspects of life on the river and come to a decision that continues to give us the lifestyle that we need and deserve.

Remember the river comes from RAIN, without rain there is no waterthere is no river this is history and will continue to be.

SOLUTIONS - I have heard several, one appeals to me, someone suggests a separate body to look after the rivers, one for the Darling and another for the Murray.

More dams, more weirs.

Pipe the water from areas that have it running out to sea, eg NT and WA. We can pipe gas why not water.

The old one of rerouting the Clarence. Yes! Build a dam and then pipe it out west when needed.

Governments should bit the bullet and actually do something instead of spending so much time and money on talking.,

SHIRLEY BOOTH