

Submission Number: 619

Date Received: 9/03/2011



Submission to the
**Inquiry into the Impact of the
Murray - Darling Basin**
in Regional Australia

9 March 2011

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Healthy Rivers, Sustainable Ecosystem.



Lower Macquarie Community and Farmers Group Inc.

Submission to the

Inquiry into the Impact of the
Murray - Darling Basin

in Regional Australia

9/3/2011

The Secretary of the Committee
House Standing Committee on Regional Australia
House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

In response to the proposed Murray Darling Basin Plan (Plan), the Lower Macquarie Community and Farmers Group (LMCF) would like to make further comment on the group's submission of 30 March 2010 that was also submitted to the Public Hearing in Dubbo on February 16, 2011.

Even though our first submission (Attached) does give a brief history of the group's formation we would like the committee to note that we are a group consisting of both irrigators (primarily cotton) and graziers and other concerned citizens from different walks of life. Our concern is that the Plan will not cover our major issue, that being

ensuring that the Macquarie River follows its natural course to the junction of the Barwon River.

It appears the MDBA has only to take into account the **environmental** factors due to international agreements for example the Ramsar Convention which prevents taking into consideration any social or economic impacts.

Myself and another LMCF member (Claire Priestley) were present at the Public Hearing in Dubbo and I did make a statement regarding our concerns.

At this hearing it was our observation that the witnesses presentation were for their own enterprise benefits and not for the overall health of the river and surrounding communities. As both graziers and irrigators we know the importance of both of these agricultural industries for communities to prosper socially and economically. In the Lower Macquarie's case the landholders have not even had the privilege of access to water for a bath with absolutely no access to water for their farming business even though this land was purchased because of its river frontage and water availability.

It is imperative that future consultation is conducted before any decisions are made in the Plan, that being all landholders are involved (as some landholders in the Lower Macquarie are not members of LMCF or other groups in the region). The issues raised by the group since 2007 have largely been ignored to the point where we feel that the relevant agencies have conveniently forgotten about us.

For example River Smart is still to visit our end of the river whilst promoting canoeing trips around Dubbo and they still talk about the Macquarie River as being from the Mountains to the Marshes. The Central West CMA could not even send a representative to the LMCF AGM in 2010. Only recently on February 22, 2011 the CMA held a Warren to the Barwon Extension Project Community meeting in Carinda which we were invited to. However the CMA also held a Two Day Resilience Workshop at Carinda at the same time, that was invite only and did not include any invitations to our members. However members of other groups were there. We find this insulting when Carinda is located next to the where the Macquarie is at its most downgraded but its community and landholders were not considered worthy of an invite.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit our views on the Plan as we trust we will finally be acknowledged as a viable mixed farming area that has suffered unnecessarily from complete mismanagement of a very significant part of the MDB. We are frustrated at the lack of interest in this area and the patronizing views taken by the fresh faced university graduates who disregard generations of experience in this region who can talk about different species of frogs but can't understand that frogs need water to survive, as does the community. We are disgusted in the Fisheries, State Water, Office of State Water who now say they are working on a Water Sharing Plan for us but at a meeting in Dubbo had no idea what our issues were, Department of Water and Energy and its Office of Compliance Section that is failing to act upon reported illegal breaches that are also contributing to the failure of water to reach the Barwon, the lack of action to pipe the Albert Priest Canal which enables Nyngan to have a water ski park while we have to purchase water for household necessity.

We do not appreciate being told who we can have as a spokesperson, that we must not upset government departments or we will not be dealt with.

Thanking you for your time and again we emphasize that we believe proper management of the MDB will benefit the environment and its communities, if the Macquarie met its destination to the Barwon there is still no reason to crucify the irrigation industry. Letting the river beds dry up is of no benefit to the end of the river system or upstream. If the committee could visit the Macquarie river near the Barwon they would see what a magnificent and deep river it becomes.

Yours faithfully,

Cheryl Yow