

**Submission Number: 69**  
**Date Received: 20/11/2010**

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Dear Mr. Windsor

SUBJECT: Impact of Murray-Darling Basin plan.

- \* on Australia's sustainable productivity
- \* on Australia's sustainable population growth
- \* on Australia's environmental protection

FACTS:

- \* the region produces 40% of Australia's food - needs WATER
- \* the region lacks the infrastructure to remain sustainably productive - needs WATER
- \* Sydney & the coastal fringes are becoming unsustainable - lack of infrastructure - needs

decentralisation

Before the recent Federal election consensus was - that to solve the problems of overpopulation, lack of infrastructure & planning in the cities, there is an urgent need for decentralisation. Regional areas lack the infrastructure to cope with an influx of population - roads, transport, communication, hospitals, schools including tertiary centres would all need intensive "therapy". The most important factor though, is WATER.

I feel that the buy-backs don't do anything to solve the problems ahead for this sustainable productivity & growth. River flows may improve but that does nothing to supply the EXTRA water necessary to sustain growing communities & ever increasing production needs for both Australia & exports for world food security. The Government must understand that farmers need the infrastructure & incentive to produce & everything must be done to ensure the development & maintenance of this vital sector for our future existence.

We need to maintain environmental flows so I feel that water must be sourced, stored & distributed from outside the current river system. Where are our lateral thinkers & entrepreneurs? Why are our engineers & water technicians not consulted instead of theoretical, impractical academics? So many people are suggesting piping water in - Bill Wentworth MP was touting this to us in the 1950s! Isn't it about time that some real planning & research was initiated to study the viability of these ideas? Cannot storm water be diverted & harvested for future use specifically for regional domestic & irrigation use. Schemes such as de-salination plants along the coast, pumping water over the Great Divide (not too far) & stored in purpose built storages for the same use, without affecting the river systems' environmental flows, have been suggested. A solar-powered de-sal plant is being built in Yemen to pump water 250kms at a cost of \$10bill. We are spending billions on buy-backs, broadband etc. What is more important than WATER SECURITY?

The long-range forecast is for a wet summer & we are sitting on our hands & doing nothing to harvest the impending extra run-off. Flooding costs the nation & it is criminal that we don't take advantage of these times of abundance. There are screams during every drought that no-one has prepared themselves properly. As soon as the drought breaks it's the same old "she'll be right mate".

Sustainable agriculture has come a long way in the last 30 years & your Committee needs to look at not just water flow & storage but also mitigation. Keyline principles would go a long way towards drought proofing farms & communities. So many innovators are doing amazing things to increase productivity while at the same time caring for the environment. In the towns, storm water mitigation practices need to be revolutionised - collection, storage, permeable paving, filtration etc.

Australians have at last become aware of the intricacies involved in a sustainable future BUT, we need GROWTH as well as sustainability. Farmers will continue to sell to the highest bidder if their

future is insecure. Environmentalists, farmers, politicians, academics & entrepreneurs need to work together to achieve the best outcome for our future.

Jan Illingworth