



Hay Shire Council

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Hay Shire
COUNCIL

7th November 2011

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural Affairs & Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Subject: The Management of the Murray-Darling Basin

Thank you for receiving this brief submission on the Management of the Murray-Darling Basin.

At the outset it should be noted that all members of the Hay community wish to see action taken to ensure a strong and healthy Murray-Darling river system for all future generations.

The Hay community is, however, bitterly disappointed it has not been the venue for any of the consultation to date on the plans being developed to rejuvenate the river system.

Please consider Hay as a venue for the deliberations and consultation processes of your Standing Committee on Rural Affairs and Transport in regard to the Management of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Council has previously made several submissions to various Committees expressing its total disappointment with the development of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan in such a premature manner. It is unthinkable that anybody, other than a Government Agency, could develop a plan for water conservation designed to save our eco-system without many key elements being accurately assessed. Some of these key elements were:-

- a) The extent and impact of infrastructure works to be funded by the Federal Government (\$7.1B)
- b) The lack of any socio-economic impact assessment study on affected communities;
- c) The impact on water consumption of better farming practices;
- d) The partial development of water sharing plans by the respective State Governments;
- e) Impact on food security;
- f) A general acceptance by State and Federal Parliaments there will be no more dams constructed for flood mitigation, regulation of environmental flows and agricultural pursuits;
- g) The serious lack of confidence in the area displayed in real estate values.

Council supports the vast majority of real workers in this region who regard the development of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan as an outstanding example of total incompetence by a bipartisan Federal Government and its bureaucrats. The impacts of this blunder will remain with the people of the Murray-Darling Basin for a long time.

From a National perspective, however, the Federal Government now needs to do what it can to mitigate the impact of the revised Murray-Darling Basin Plan when it is released on 28th November 2011. The promise of Federal Funding to reduce the socio-economic impacts on affected communities needs to be delivered quickly and without too many bureaucratic requirements which have hindered the delivery of past stimulus packages.

Subject: Murrumbidgee River Issues

Hay is a small rural community of 3,500 persons located on the banks of the Murrumbidgee Weir Pool approximately half way between Sydney and Adelaide.

Apart from the concern the community has expressed in regard to the inappropriate development of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan there is now a good deal of unrest with the seemingly poor management of the weir pool.

The community accepted the variations in the level of the weir pool during the drought years as the upstream major dams were severely stressed and the regulation on down-stream supplies was difficult to manage.

Since the end of the drought and the filling of upstream dams the rise and fall of the weir pool seems to have become more repetitive and dramatic with the result that serious environmental damage is being caused to the river banks and environs. Representations to the State Government to have a more stable weir pool level have so far been unsuccessful. Many trees have fallen into the river which also compromises the recreational use of this great attraction for locals and visitors alike.

Thank you for considering some of the issues of the Hay community in the management of this most important and scarce resource.

I would reiterate the invitation for your committee to sit in Hay as such an act of conciliation would go a long way to restore some confidence in the system.

Kind regards



Allen Dwyer
General Manager