



30 November 2010

TO The Prime Minister, Minister, MPs and Senators, MDBA, Senate and House of Reqs Committees

My family and associates own four properties in the Murray Barling Basin which are located in the Wentworth Shire. We are the custodians of over 70km of riverfrontage and over 20 wetlands. While I believe the environment should be a high Government priority I have a number of deep concerns about the MDBA Plan:

PROCESS

Why are Murray Darling Basin communities denied a fair process? Why have socio-economic factors not been considered?

There could be no greater example of how detached from reality the Draft MDBA Plan is than that you would expect farmers to respond by 30 November. Have you heard of harvesting crops?

It is simply unbelievable that you would expect farmers to get off their headers after a 12 or 16 hour day and expect them to read the Draft MDBA Plan and respond by today or mid-December.

DRAFT MDBA PLAN FAILS TO CONSIDER KEY FACTORS

The Draft MDBA Plan considers SDLs in isolation of many vital factors. The Murray Darling system was engineered in the 1930s, 80 years ago, but the MDBA assumes the system must remain as is.

How can the Draft MDBA Plan be considered comprehensive without considering:

- the location and engineering of the Weirs?
- management of the Weir pool variability?
- invasive waterweed?
- change to management of Lower Lakes?

RAINS ALLOW TIME TO DO JOB PROPERLY

Given the enormous rains recently there is no immediate crisis. All our billabongs are full and the system dams are all full.

There is now no excuse for hastily implementing a flawed Plan. While urgency was arguable at the height of the drought, these circumstances are no longer applicable.

AUTHORITIES NEED TO BE HELD TO ACCOUNT

The State Government Departments and MDBA need to be held to account for the mismanagement of the system to date. They have been running the system, not the communities or the irrigators. It is like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank!

WRONG ASSUMPTION

It has been publicly asserted that water buybacks are the most efficient way of the Government re-balancing the system. I believe that if the full community economic impacts were considered, including the consequence of throwing communities onto welfare, stranded Government assets and losses of tax revenue, it would be clear that buybacks were not always the correct option

Kind regards

Bob Wheeldon
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