

Mr Alan Gilmore

26 August 2015

THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE
ON THE MURRAY DARLING BASIN PLAN.

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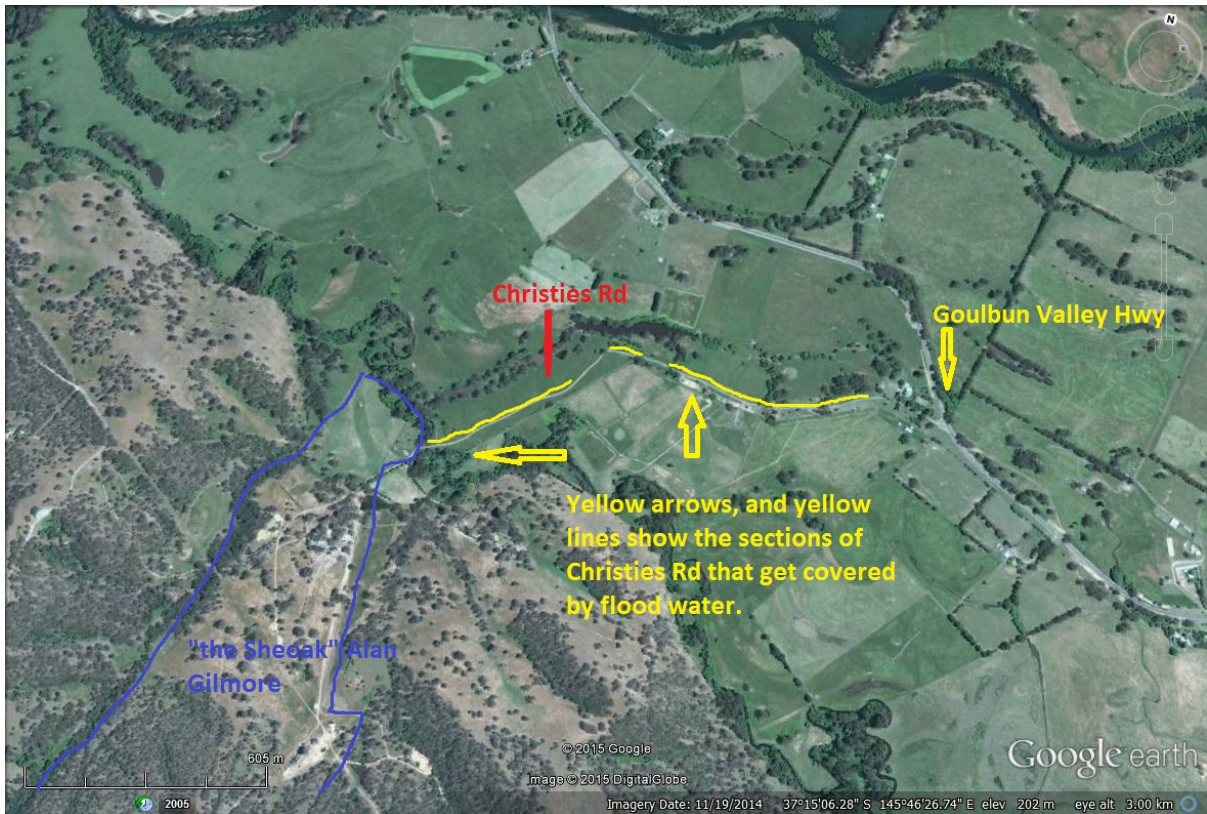
Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you to voice my concern about the impact of the Murray Darling Basin Plan and more specifically the Constraints Management Plan on myself and the district, more generally.

I have lived in and around Thornton, 20km below Lake Eildon for 70 years. I have seen many floods come and go; but they have all been "natural" floods. Never did I think I would see the day when someone puts up a proposal to create a man-made flood over private property.

In your deliberations please will you consider these points, specifically relating to Christies Road and access to my property:

1. I live on a property, known as "The Sheoak", at the end of Christies Rd. There are 2 other properties at the end of Christies Rd. We will all lose access to our properties under the MDBA proposal to send flood water down the Goulburn. The landholders are not the only ones who use the road, it is also the public access road to the Rubicon River. In 2006, Fisheries Victoria had a traffic counter on the road, during the fishing season and found that approximately 2000 vehicles used Christies Road, over the fishing season (8 months).
2. Looking at the MDBA flood maps, they claim we lose access at flows of 15 000 ML/day. Being a long time resident of the area, I think these maps understate the impact, because they don't consider the backup of the Rubicon. In my view, Christies Rd will go under water at 12 000ML/day, with a Rubicon flow of just over 1000 ML/day.
3. Christies Rd is about 1.6 km long. To maintain access to my property (and others to theirs), will take a considerable amount of road improvement. The road will need to be lifted by up to 1.5 metres in sections, with most of it sitting on culverts to allow the flood waters to pass. The bridge over the Rubicon will also need lifting.
4. Without this remediation work, on Christies Road, I am fearful that someone may well be swept away in the floods. I would like to know who will be held to account if a life is lost in such an event. The MDBA needs to understand the human cost of what they are proposing.
5. I understand that the Constraints Management Strategy is supposed to take account of all of these issues. However, no one from MDBA has come and asked me about access to my property and I am concerned that the budget may not extend to fixing Christies Road.
6. Over the page, is a map showing the detail of where my property is in relation to the Goulburn and Rubicon Rivers. You will see our access road (Christies Rd) and where it becomes submerged. I am only too happy to show someone from the MDBA the problems they are creating.



I would also like to make a couple of observations of a more general nature:

1. I am concerned that too much water is now being taken from irrigators and given to the environment especially following dry winters, when water is more scarce. The MDBA needs to take more account of its social and economic obligations. The Goulburn Valley is one of this countries most prized farming regions and farming assets need to be looked after.
2. I am also concerned about the slumping on river banks, owing to the removal of willow trees that will occur following flood releases. Further damage to downstream infrastructure will result as trees are washed into bridges, fences etc.
3. MDBA could overcome most of these problems by spending their budget on pumping infrastructure to water the wet lands they are concerned about. I am not sure why the MDBA is fixated on creating a "gravity flood", with all its associated costs, rather than pumping onto site like irrigators do.

Yours truly.

Alan Gilmore.