

To
The Standing Committee on Rural Affairs and Transport
The Committee Secretary.

Response to the Guide to the proposed Basin Plan.

I am a long-time member of Region 5 of the Murray Darling Association and a past elected member of the Renmark-Paringa Council. I have lived in Renmark or Berri all my life.

I refer you to the Region 5 of the MDA submission as part of my submission.

I would also suggest that maybe a lot of submissions you have received could now be different had Mr Taylor's resignation occurred earlier, and the differences of opinion between he and Minister Bourke were more widely published. There would be differences, too, had Minister Paul Caica's recent announcements of no more than 67% of irrigator's allocations will be allowed, when further rains in the catchment have boosted inflows into South Aust to 60,000 megs. per day – and there are further rains happening..Also the loss of carry-over water to Sth Aust irrigators.

Our (MDA) organization has been advocating a hold on further MD developments for at least 15 years – and showing concerns about in-efficient irrigation practices interstate.

Initially, the establishment of a National Water Management Plan was applauded. It is very disappointing to now to see that individual States will still manage waters allocated to them - Sth Aust have proven their inability to be good water managers.

- for example – in the middle of argument on water allocation, SA Water announces further development proposals for the Yorke Peninsula saying they had plenty of (Murray) water – in addition to a Golf Course proposal using 9 megs per day.
- It seems, too, that Victoria has a different set of rules than other States.

We are going to see a huge increase in evaporation when the Chowilla regulator is operating. This project will flood some 000's of hectares and then the rubbish water that remains will be returned to the River. Environmental Projects such as Chowilla must have irrigation practices that reflect a genuine intent to use water efficiently – and flood irrigating flood plains is known to be very inefficient.

When Environmental water was first discussed/considered we were told that as much as 500 gigs. of water would be needed to make a reasonable difference to the Environment and improve river flows. This has now been blown out to 3000 maybe 7000 gigs. The 500 gigs had some support in the basin – remembering that is more than 25% of Sth Aus total allocation! 3000 or more just does not have that support.

If there are differences between Government and Agencies in interpreting the Act, then maybe the Act is flawed. Working groups also have different ideas about how much water should be allocated to the Environment. It seems that “Greenies” have too much influence on the decision makers – often when their only interests are idealistic but not practical.

To introduce environmental allocations in the middle of a drought and reduce irrigator’s allocations at a time when returns are down considerably forcing irrigators into the market to buy water to replace that which was stolen from them was a very bad way of starting a programme of environmental management. Considering that Governments have promoted developments of the MD Basin for many years, and then take their water away, this was an extremely bad process.

I have been made aware that in 1904 and 1908, the Adelaide University presented to Government papers warning about the over-allocation of the resource of the Murray. We did not take much advice from those warnings.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this.

I look forward to receiving the 2nd Draft Plan and being able to make further comments.

Trevor R Loxton

12th Dec 2010