

15 December 2010

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



"Our Future Together"
MURRUMBIDGEE BRANCH

Dear Committee Secretary

As chair of the Young Irrigation Network (YIN) I would like to make a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on the Guide to the Proposed Basin Plan on behalf of all our Network members.

YIN was established in late 2001 in recognition of the need to identify, develop and network the next generation of industry and community leaders for the irrigation industry. YIN not only represents young irrigators but also young people involved in all associated industry such as government departments, rural finance organisations, irrigation suppliers, research and extension and agri-business.

Firstly we would like to bring to your attention the uncertainty the Guide and the intended reductions in entitlement/allocation have created for all members of our communities. This uncertainty has only added to the difficulty in attracting young people to agriculture.

In fact, quite a number of excellent young farmers have expressed the view that they want to get out of farming all together, because of the added pressure the MDB Plan has placed on their family and business. To make matters worse, older generations are reluctant to encourage their children to pursue a career in agriculture (whether it be farming, extension, research or agribusiness) and living in rural and regional areas.

In recent years irrigation farmers have been making more out of every drop of water, often by novel means and innovative measures in order to remain viable. We would urge the MDBA to look at more innovative measures and adaptations rather than the sweeping cuts to agriculture suggested in the guide.

We believe that in order for Australian Agriculture to remain viable in the long term, government needs to develop stronger policy (such as proper labelling laws, equal import rules) which will positively impact not only the future of young people in irrigated agriculture and regional communities but also every Australian. We are willing to nominate advisors that can assist the MDBA in leading this change and welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Senate Inquiry into the management of the MDB in order to achieve a positive outcome for all.

Yours faithfully

Kristy Bartrop - Chair YIN Committee