

PECHELBA TRUST

7th March 2011

The Secretary
The Standing Committee on Legal
& Constitutional Affairs of the Senate,
CANBERRA



Dear Sir

Re: Inquiry into provisions of the Water Act 2007

We are irrigators operating irrigation farms at Moree on the Gwydir River system, at Wee Waa on the Namoi River system and at Dirranbandi on the Lower Balonne in Qld.

We are a family farming company and have been irrigating for 32 years.

In all those years we have never had a threat to our survival as dire as the MDBA Draft Basin Plan proposes.

Would you please note that we do not intend to repeat all of our reasons why the Draft Basin Plan is so wrong and unfair, because we were told in Canberra in a meeting with MDBA and Craig Knowles on 21st February, 2011, that as Chair he only gets to read a few submissions. The rest are handled by bureaucrats.

We do wish you to know that we fully support the submission prepared by National Irrigators Council's CEO Danny O'Brien, the submission prepared by NSW Irrigators Council CEO Andrew Gregson and the submission prepared by Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association. These submissions prove very clearly, that to serve Australians fairly, the Water Act 2007 needs amendment to at least give the triple bottom line equal opportunity.

We have had the privilege of reading the submission to your enquiry, by John Briscoe – Gordon McKay Professor of the Practice of Environmental Engineering, Harvard University. This should be required reading for everyone, from Prime Minister to bureaucrats, journalists and every voting Australian. It exposes how making political decisions can cause so much disaster to so many.

It seems very wrong to allow the Water Act 2007 to remain as it is, when there is good argument that whatever the outcomes the MDBA Basin Plan is likely to be challenged in court. Why put Australia's irrigators and townspeople in areas affected by the Basin Plan, through more stress and uncertainty?

Just one example of how devastating the water management in this country has become – a motel owner in Mt Gambier SA told us last week that it is nearly impossible to sell a motel in any town reliant on irrigation because the water buybacks and water grabs for environmental use have caused so much uncertainty. We can see for ourselves the towns we operate in are being devastated by political decisions on water to buy green votes.

We urge you to consider and amend the Water Act 2007 to allow for a commonsense triple bottom line approach to water management.

Yours faithfully,

**Ian & Robyn Cush
for Pechelba Trust**