

Senate Hearing (Inspector-General of Water Compliance) Supplementary Submission



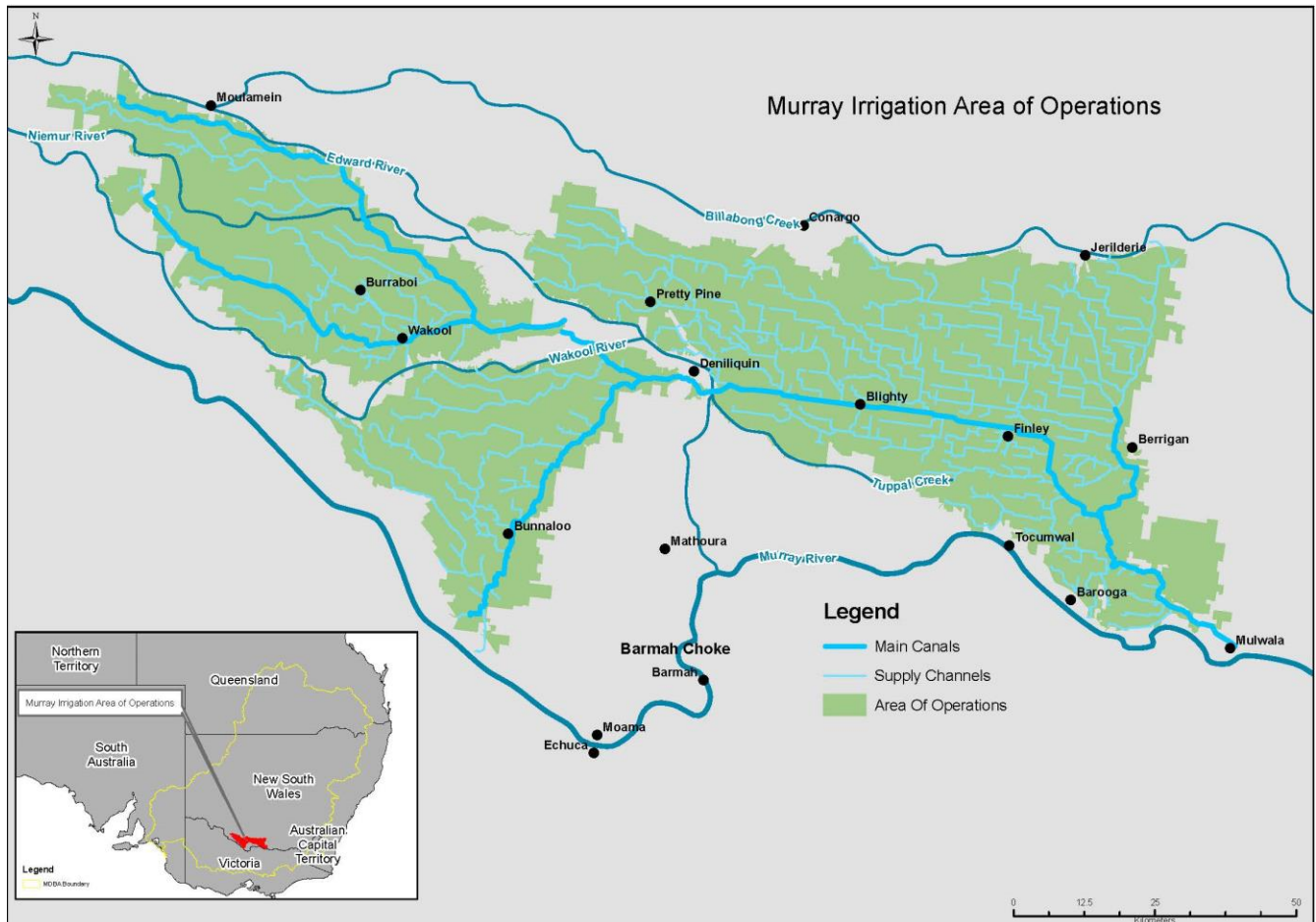
Supplementary Submission- Senate hearing Inspector-General of Water Compliance

We have previously provided a submission to the Committee and have compiled a supplementary submission outlined in three key themes:

1. About Murray Irrigation
2. Interactions to date with the Inspector-General Water Compliance (IGWC)
3. Expansion of the IGWC Terms of Reference

1.1 About Murray Irrigation

Murray Irrigation is a not-for-profit company owned by our shareholders who are our irrigator customers. We recover costs to deliver a high standard of customer service to deliver water and to maintain our extensive irrigation infrastructure. We are located in the Southern Riverina delivering reliable and productive water to around 2,100 family owned landholdings across 724,000 hectares through 2,778km of gravity-fed earthen channels. We are located above the Barmah Choke and the owners of the only existing system that can reduce pressure on the Barmah Choke.



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Since privatization, government water reform has meant around 30% of water entitlements from our licence has been acquired for environmental use. In addition to this the reliability of General Security Water Entitlements has reduced from an average of 74% to less than 50%.

Water delivery has reduced from around 1,000GL annually to less than 600GL yet our infrastructure maintenance and replacement costs continue to rise against this diminishing income base.

Murray Irrigation and our community needs financial assistance to recover from these impacts to the sum of 30% of our asset base or \$300 Million. Our position is that there must not any further buyback of water entitlements and instead there needs to be a focus on environmental outcomes. We see ourselves as solution-providers and have put forward a package of projects to support Basin sustainability

1.2 Interactions to date with the Inspector-General Water Compliance

We welcome the commencement of activities of the Inspector-General and support their workplan. We have commenced dialogue with the department and found the officers engaging and genuinely interested in making their roles effective. We have been introduced by the department through video conference where we had the opportunity to listen to their workplan and for us to raise specific issues for the IGWC to investigate.

1.3 Expansion of the IGWC Terms of Reference

We continue to be significantly impacted by adverse policy and feel that the IGWC terms need to be expanded to better encompass the full spectrum of matters that impact our valley in order to be effective in enforcing compliance within the existing terms of reference.

We would like the IGWC workplan to include strategic implications and conclusions from other reviews such as ACCC and Sefton report.

Particular issues to Murray Irrigation of concern include:

- Third party impacts from current water reform policy
- Allocation processes and the implications of these
- Increased conveyance losses
- Improved management and coordination of environmental water

We also believe that the IG needs to be able to put forward informed opinions on robust common-sense projects and initiatives that are outside the influence of petty politics.