

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL
AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT
6TH December 2010
G.P.O. BOX 6100 CANBERRA ACT 2600

Re Murray-Darling Basin Plan

submitted by Trevor Randall..

Shire President 1977-1987.. Storekeeper. Bourke Retravisoin.. Trev Randall
Newsagency . Prairie and Kanimbla Stations..

Our Family has operated retail stores in Bourke since 1957.. we currently employ
approx 16 persons.. Our stores are managed by our Children who now are asking us
why they should stay when the future has become uncertain due to excessive water
cuts to irrigation, our major employer and industry.

BOURKE RALLY

Prior to the meeting with the authority in Bourke .. a rally was held
At the Bourke Warf approx 700 people attended and when it is considered that
Bourke population is only now around 3000 this is possibly the largest proportion of
people in any area to attend one of these meetings

.Showing the concern and anger.

At the rally the main theme was

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH..

The speakers at the rally.. three previous mayors and the current mayor .. and the
people decided to advise Governments that we are sick of being unfairly treated.. we
will not accept any further reductions and will fight to get a fairer deal.. even if this
means a policy of Non co=operation with Government and Civil disobedience.

Bourke itself has been disgracefully treated by both sides of parliament and by both
parties.

Toorale was purchased and converted to a National Park... result.. Bourke lost about
ten percent of its commercial activity with the de commissioning of this business.. and
now Bourke ratepayers have to pay the approx \$46000 in yearly Council rates that
used to be paid to Bourke Shire Council.

As a result of the CAP process 67% of water entitlements were confiscated without
compensation by the State Government at the request of the Commonwealth
Governments so called "water reforms".This caused an enormous problem to
Bourke's economy

The whole CAP process was flawed as was agreed by the authority at the Bourke meeting.. the IQQM model is a sham , noone understands it and yet this was used to arrive at our current AVL .

No other area has been dealt with so heavily
As the Barwon Darling.

Two of Bourkes Major employers Back O Bourke Fruits and Alambi Farms have gone into receivership. These two major employers and contributors to Bourkes business activity would have survived the drought if their equity had not been stolen by the NSW State Government with the 67% confiscation. They would now with big amounts of water flowing for some months down the system have been back in production, people who left the town would now be returning.

Of late the Bourke town people have been informed by State water that the amount of water available to the town will be reduced.

Now the Murray Darling Authority suggests a further reduction of up to 29 percent of the reduced 173 AVL. This figure approx 30 ML would close down most of the irrigation in the Barwon Darling catchment and further decimate the Communities there -in.

The Water Sharing scheme now being worked on by the NSW State Government further threatens the availability of water to the irrigation industry.

It would appear that the MDBA was unaware or failed to consider the previous Excessive CAP cuts to the Barwon Darling catchment and the heavy impact that this has had to the town of Bourke.

While some of this could be attributed to the drought, now the drought is over the return to previous levels is not possible due to the permanent removal of a large proportion of the irrigation industry from our town.

All this has been researched and documented by the Judith Stubbs and Associates detailed report.

Was this report even considered by the M D B A?

Apparently not.

The effect on Bourke and other Communities was large.
Bourke's population dropped by about 1000 , approx 25 percent.
A number of businesses have closed including a major Supermarket , Farm Machinery outlet and service, Shell fuel depot, and others, many remaining businesses report a decrease in business with jobs lost, Franchising in retail is important as it supplies city prices and choice to customers not normally available in the Bush but is based on high turnover and costs the retailer.
One store has recently had to let its franchise go due to lower business activity
A school has announced it will close at the end of 2010.

Unless this senseless attack on our town is reversed Bourke will continue to decline and inevitably services such as health, law and order, and other services will decline

It cannot be denied that the 67 % confiscation of water licenses by the CAP process was more than unfair to the Barwon Darling Irrigators.

While many valleys had a 20 to 30% reduction we had 67%.. why so ? where is the fairness.

Recent figures obtained show an average reduction to achieve CAP in NSW catchments is 38% (Barwon Darling 67% WHY?)

No area has been treated so badly.

A comparison exists between the Barwon Darling Basin and the Lower Bolon
Barwon Darling AVL 173 GL
Lower Bolon AVL 1200 GL (approx 600% more than ours) WHY ?

Is this fair ?

The MDBA has in my mind not properly looked at the facts that exist in the previous treatment of the Barwon Darling catchment . If they had seen how harshly we have already been treated then they should have recommended .

1. No further reduction in AVL s

and

2. a review of the already harsh and unfair reductions applied to the Barwon Darling catchment when compared to other areas.

If there has to be pain it should be fairly distributed.

We are asking that examination should be made valley by valley. Which will illustrate clearly just how harshly our catchment has been treated.

Trey Randall