



Submission No: 573

Date Received: 25-1-11

Secretary: SL

To the chairman of the house of representatives standing committee, Tony Windsor. We are a senior couple extremely concerned and sick with worry about our family ,s future in Griffith if the proposed MURRAY – Darling Basin water plan is enacted or more severe cuts may be Wanted ( not Needed ).

All our family, 3 adults and their husbands / wives ,9 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren have always lived in Griffith , we have no wish to live anywhere else.

Living in a broad farming area dependent on irrigation our family are keenly aware that our financial and social security is closely linked to a strong viable farming industry . To cause irreparable damage to such a large relatively safe food growing area , compared to the flooding in other states which have all but washed away their fresh produce and prime meat animals.

Relying on food supplies from other countries <sup>which</sup> can be destroyed by natural disasters and wars, is extremely dangerous to our Australian population.

We ask the House of Representatives Standing Committee to think very hard about how many people and wildlife will be destroyed if you get it WRONG.

FROM Stewart and Thelma Broome.

NEWS

# Barrages a bar to basin at best



JENNIFER MAROHASY  
COMMENT

AT THE bottom of the Murray-Darling river system are five large steel and concrete barriers blocking 90 per cent of the natural ebb and flow between Lake Alexandrina and the Southern Ocean.

To the north-west of the largest of these barrages is Hindmarsh Island, a new golf course and housing estate where retirees are encouraged to buy their piece of paradise on the edge of a freshwater lake.

The Lower Lakes were not always fresh. Before the barrages were built they filled with seawater in periods of drought but now enjoy continual flows of fresh water from the Hume and Dartmouth dams. The Lower Lakes, Coorong and Murray mouth will be the main recipients of all the proposed environmental flows in the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's controversial new *Guide to the Proposed Basin Plan*.

The guide says the equivalent of four Sydney Harbours of freshwater must be delivered to the Lower Lakes yearly by taking water from irrigators as far away as the Namoi Valley in north-western NSW. When representatives of the authority attended a meeting in the Namoi

Peter Gell and Deborah Haynes details how the barrages have changed the ecology of the Lower Lakes and affected the adjacent Coorong.

There is an argument, put forward by Tim Flannery of the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists and Greg Hunt, the federal opposition spokesman on climate, that if the barrages had not been in place during the recent drought, salt water would have penetrated an unnatural distance up the Murray River.

These opinion leaders seem to ignore that there was more water travelling down the river during this drought than in either 1914-15 or 1945-46, so there is no reason to suppose the intrusion would have been any worse than back then - before the completion of the Snowy Mountains scheme. The bottom line is that the guide is about taking water from our best food-producing farm land and sending it down to the Lower Lakes, which were never a totally freshwater system and are degraded by European carp and housing developments.

Not so many years ago Bob Brown, leader of the Greens, was saying it had been "scientifically proven" that 1.5 million megalitres were needed to solve the problems of the Murray-Darling Basin. Since then at least 1 million megalitres have been bought back.

During the drought the river did not run dry and the world's largest environmental flow release of 513,000 megalitres was made into the Barmah-Millewa Forest. During this past year the basin has

“During the drought the river did not run dry.”

## Our water our future

# Here's more food for thought

THEY'RE the numbers that not even the most hysterical Greenie could refute.

Vast amounts of locally produced wine, citrus, rice, chicken, vegetables and much more – this is what's at stake for the MIA and the nation if the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) pushes ahead with its great water grab.

The issue of food security – only a bit-player in the debate so far – has burst into the spotlight, with local farmers and irrigator groups warning there will be dire consequences for all Australian consumers if the Basin Plan is adopted.

They say spiralling food costs and biosecurity risks are just the tip of the iceberg if much of the nation's food bowl is rendered unworkable by water cuts.

"It won't just rip the guts out of local industries, it will force us to import more food from all over the world," High

## 10 reasons we should keep all our water

### Our region produces:

1 **Wine:** 25 per cent of Australia's wine

2 **Wine grapes:** 20 per cent of Australia's wine grapes

3 **Citrus:** 33 per cent of Australia's citrus fruit

4 **Juice:** 66 per cent of Australia's orange juice

5 **Rice:** 99 per cent of Australia's rice

6 **Livestock:** Region has 130,000 cattle, 505,000 sheep and 38,000 pigs

7 **Chicken:** Baiada kills approximately 25 million birds each year

8 **Vegetables:** Region produces vast amounts of carrots, onions,

gherkins, lettuce, potatoes, broccoli, capsicums,

pumpkins, prunes, rockmelons and watermelons

9 **Cherries and nuts:** An emerging industry. Current annual turnover is \$35 million (walnuts) and \$4 million (cherries)

10 **Grain and cotton:** Worth about \$100 million to the region annually

Security Irrigators – Murrumbidgee chief executive officer Brian Halse said.

"Price rises for food will occur, there's nothing surer.

"And of course there will be quality issues. Australia is a highly regulated market and we have strict protocols that aren't necessarily in place in other countries."

NSW Farmers' Association local branch president Peter Flanagan said the MIA's geographical advantage in food production meant it should be the last place earmarked for water cuts.

"We are in a great position really and we have the most secure water access of any area in Australia," Mr Flanagan said.

"We've got two major storage dams in Blowering and Burrinjuck nearby and our soil type is perfect for growing crops.

"It's insane to even contemplate taking water from this area – it makes no sense.

"Australia's got a growing population and we need more food production, not less."

A huge rally in Griffith last week has sparked a parliamentary inquiry into the impact on communities of water cuts, while the MDBA announced at the weekend it had commissioned its own socio-economic study.