

25 JAN 2011

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To the Murray-Darling Investigation Committee Chairman
The Hon. Tony Windsor, and members of the team.

Last June, Messrs Joyce, Catanzariti and Piccoli applauded the opposition's proposed grant of \$7000 to entice city dwellers to relocate to areas like Griffith. (AN Mon. June 13th)

Why would anyone come to this area when it is under threat of water cuts of up to 50% or more, depending on the outlook of the decision makers.

Burrinjock Dam was built to provide water for the western side of the dividing range and the Snowy Mountain Scheme included the hydro electric system to achieve maximum benefit from these waters.

Successive Governments handed out licences to draw water from rivers from the top of Queensland right down through N.S.W. Victoria and God knows where else. Many of these licences were not activated, and lay dormant until the State Government presented their White Paper some years ago, in which they separated the water from the land.

Suddenly people realised the value of these pieces of paper. - very soon those who had the previously unused licences sold them - in fact, sold what; in fact, did not exist, water. In other cases it was sold off farms, leaving dry areas in an irrigation area.

Is your committee using the licenses as a figure of what has been taken from the river, They do not represent a true figure - many many were never activated until N.S.W. woke up the sleeping giant.

Combined with a seven year drought the farmers in this Riverina area have been struggling to keep their heads above their debts.

And NOW the Government is hell bent on reducing the water allocations even more.

The irony of this is that, while you all sit there determining how little water we can have, we have people drowning, losing their stock and crops and towns losing their businesses.

And yet successive Governments have not made one move to build dams for conservation. We have Tony Abbott bleating about how He would build dams - what happened during the 11 odd years he was in Government? **Absolutely nothing.**

I pray that this Committee will really look at how water cuts will obliterate this area.

Loss of irrigation means not only the loss of rice, citrus and vineyards - it would have a flow on loss - machinery firms, wineries, fat lamb production, irrigated wheat, fruit and vegetables, Real Estate Agents, Stock and Station Agents, as well as firms dealing with water systems, spare parts - and so it goes on.

A loss of irrigation and associated businesses also means less population, less housing required, less food stores, less clothing and household businesses, decrease in medical services, (and a reduction in visiting specialists); downturn in clubs with associated loss of jobs - in fact, less Griffith, Leeton, Colleenbally, Yenda, Hanwood and surrounding areas.

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The laughable part is the "scientist's" suggestion that all food production be moved to the coastal areas!!.

Look what happened to the wonderful market gardens formerly around Sydney - they are all under housing development now.

Already we see much of our Griffith agricultural land going under housing... because of Government stupidity in letting oranges in from America -

Unfortunately, if the water cuts are as high as has been intimated, then the houses built on this agricultural land will be like those in America... sold only as fire sales.

Betty Brady