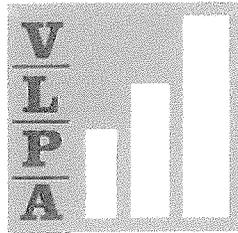


Submission No: .....	633
Date Received: .....	30/3/11
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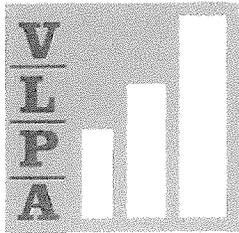
**Inquiry into the Impact of the Murray Darling Basin Plan in Regional Australia**

**Submission to House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia**

The Victorian Limestone Producers Association (VLPA) represents the interests of producers of agricultural lime in Victoria and into Southern Australia. Our members supply lime into the Murray Darling Basin area. Agricultural lime is an important naturally derived input and potential input into soils in the Murray –Darling Basin area to combat acidity and improve soil productivity. As can be seen from the CSIRO map attached to the NAA submission, there is significant incidence of acid soils in the Basin which the Commonwealth Government’s “Caring for Country” program is addressing and in which VLPA is involved in the delivery of through seminars and field day activities.

The VLPA wishes to submit the following in relation to the above Committee Inquiry.

- According to the Guide to the Basin Plan, 30% of Australia’s food is produced in the Basin area and 40% of farmed land is in the Basin. Much of this land is subject to acidification (CSIRO Caring for Country Studies) for which agricultural lime is an important soil ameliorant which can increase productivity by around 20%
- The importance of a soil healthy Basin for food security hence must be maintained.
- The Water Act 2007 gave priority to environmental flows ahead of economic and social. In view of the above, NAA maintains that economic flows need to be treated at least equally to environmental and social in an amended Water Act.
- More dams need to be erected to capture excess water during peak flows using money allocated for buy backs. The water would then be available for environmental flows in dry periods.
- Dams, weirs, locks, irrigation channels and irrigated farmland have massively expanded wetlands which cutting economic allocations would mean reducing the benefits to wildlife and the environment.
- As farming in the Basin reduced as a result of permanent economic allocation reductions the viability of towns and regions in the basin would decline and add considerable stress on infrastructure of areas Basin population would seek to relocate to.



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VLPA would be pleased to provide more information as required and can be contacted through the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

**Peter McCluskey**  
Business Manager  
Victorian Limestone Producers Association  
30/3/2011