

Committee Secretary,  
Standing Committee on Regional Australia  
P.O. Box 6021,  
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Secretary: .....	SC

Enough - Enough – Enough.

I refer to the slaughter of irrigated farming in the Murray – Darling Basin.  
It has been a well orchestrated plan, carried out for a number of years, culminating in the Murray Darling Basin Authority draft plan.

It has been accelerated by the repeat drought of 100 years earlier.

We have a lethal combination of economists and supermarket chains wanting to import food and fibre products from low labour cost countries, and misguided environmentalism that wants the countryside return to its native state. Hence the removal of farmers from both forces.

The environmental lobby has grown to such an extent that no political party will stand up to them and say enough. Both major parties are being manipulated by 10% of voters on environmental issues.

The major issue is the theory of man made climate change and how to alter it. Many are sceptical of the theory and many are gullible to the theory. Politicians are being asked to make a judgment. Those who say they would prefer to give the planet the benefit of the doubt are in the gullible category.

If your committee is gullible to this theory then the decision will be to remove irrigated farming and run the water into the sea. Why would that be done when you would think holding onto all the water for the support of civilisation, would be logical. The answer is if you are gullible to the theory of climate change then you become gullible to all matters promoted by the environmental lobby.

FICTION.

The river system is dying, because water for farming has been over allocated.

FACTS.

The river system is not dying, it varies in flows between floods and droughts.  
Water for farming is allocated fortnightly from water available at the time. During the recent drought years farmers allocation in NSW for 2 years was ZERO. A water entitlement is a maximum figure.

FICTION.

The lower lakes at the mouth of the Murray are drying up because of farming use of water.

## FACTS.

The lower lakes were drying up because of once in 100 years drought. The lower lakes are a tidal estuary and in past droughts prior to the barrages, the water in the lakes would be Sea water, with mainly fresh water in times of flood. Take the barrage out and move them up stream to allow nature to work. For peoples needs around the lakes, pipe water from upstream.

## FICTION.

The lower lakes are environmentally Sacred and need to be kept full.

## FACTS.

They are a tidal estuary and should be allowed to operate that way. To close hundreds of productive farms to keep the lakes full is nonsensical.

## FICTION.

The climate is changing to drier so Environmentalists should take over Watering gum trees and wetlands.

## FACTS.

The theory of climate change cannot be proven for at least 100 years. This last season has shown red gums and wetlands survive drought very well, and don't need environmentalists playing GOD and watering them.

Changes already made by bureaucracy to prepare for governments at all levels taking water back from farmers.

1. Separating water licences from land tenure.
2. Introducing carry over water rules now at 100% in Victoria.

This has been done to give governments more water in dry years when they will need zero in wet years. This will lead to very low farmer allocations in early spring when they most need it in dry years. Storages prevented from being used for flood mitigation in wet years as they will be holding government and farmers carry over water. Farmers are now forced to carry water over because carry over water rules lead to low spring allocations.

3. In Victoria water purchased by the government does not have an annual Goulburn Murray Water rates charge. This rates charge had a name change to an infrastructure charge and stays with the farm that sold the water. Water bought in Victoria from farmers financially broke from the drought, leaves them with annual water rates to pay and no farm income. Their land is also virtually unsaleable as it has a large annual water fee, which has to be paid if used as a dry farm. This has to be altered in Victoria if buy back is proceeded with as the consequences to future land tenure will be devastating. It will open the way for the Chinese government to

buy large tracts of our best farmland and use their trading power with Australia to get the water they need to grow food for them not us.

Other matters arising.

1. A temporary water (1 year only) sell back to farmers needs to be included for years of water excess.
2. Water authorities fees should be paid by water owners, including government.
3. Problems of land tenure in irrigated farmland need to be addressed. I believe a prolonged buyback of a large volume of water from irrigation areas will continue to cause the transfer of land tenure to be dysfunctional. This would be better if the willing seller policy was discarded. Whilst governments of all levels are in the water market it ceases to function as a market. If a decision is made to remove X megalitres from farmers entitlements, then an across the board proportional requisition from each farmer should be done with adequate compensation paid. On the proviso all levels of government were then barred from operating in the water market. State and local governments then to have access to federal water pool. The suggested sell back policy earlier, to be returned on a 1 year basis to state water authorities for distribution, not lumped onto the temporary water market.
4. Another matter affecting the sale of farms with irrigation infrastructure but no water to other farmers to expand, is the house. Local government rules need to allow the farm house to be sold separately to the land.

In conclusion I remind the committee that there is a huge catchment downstream of dams, which causes floods from time to time. To use the dams built for irrigation, for a few intellectual misguided environmentalists to play God and water native areas when they think is anti civilisation. Your committee needs to decide if you want a civilisation or you don't.

Yours faithfully,

John Brian