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SUBMISSION

To

The

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN COMMITTEE

From

C.J. Wharton's A.E.R.O. HILLBILLY Enterprises

2nd December 2010.

PREAMBLE:-

My qualifications & authority to comment upon the matter under consideration may technically hinge around my being responsible for 40 Hectares of the skin of Planet Earth, located a kilometre West of the Watershed, meaning that one pays \$500 or so in Rates, & AHLI-Levies, for the privilege of putting something between 5 Megalitres & 20 Megalitres into the Darling's headwaters every, year; so.... it's my liquid-contribution that you-all're a-fixin' to have y'selves a feeding-frenzy upon, therefore, it'd be polite for you to consider my views.

Every society apparently requires a "Fool-On-The-Hill", it's been argued that otherwise the "Beatles" would never have sung about it... and where I live it's agreed that it appears to be my vocation; while one of the "Beginnings of Wisdom" is the willingness to take a Fool's advice, on occasion, where appropriate.

WORLDVIEW:-

There are people, quite nice people, who regularly think to themselves "Oh, What a shame - look at all that lovely water just going to waste....!"; whenever they observe water in a creek or river, especially if it's flowing past land on which they're attempting to profit by farming.

There are other people, those who are educated in the ways of Biological Science, who are aware that the "Prime-Function" of "Biology" (that's "Life-Science", d'y'know that?) is that "THE MORE LIFE THAT OCCUPIES A SPACE, THE MORE LIFE IS ABLE TO OCCUPY THE SPACE...!" (each additional Species creates at least 3 niches, for other Species to live within.); and one of the saddest things about Humanity at the moment is that for the past 5,000 years it's been those who see "Rivers" as "Water-going-to-waste" that've been allowed to have their way.

Anybody with a flair for "Crypto-Semantics" would readily perceive the flaw in the logic, of those who see all the water as being available for farming, it lies in the expanded meaning of their word "just"; perusal of a Dictionary yields the fact that the full word is "Justifiably", so the petard upon which yonder Irrigators have hoist themselves is that they're claiming it's against Justice for there to be water in the river. A second spiral around the circular-logic track involves most cultural-views on Justice appearing to stem from an agreed-perception of what the Godtheory would think, about whatever issue is under scrutiny; and since it's the Godtheory which rains the Life & the Water into the River-Basin, while a definition of a "River" involves running into the ocean.....So in view of Australia's Constitutional Pre-ambule including the "One Nation Under God..." statement, it's probably "Unconstitutional" to allow the Irrigation-Community to suck the River dry in their pursuit of money-making schemes.

There haven't been many issues which could knit together the Biologists with the Theologists and the Constitutional Lawyers, to unite against the Economists & the Agriculturalists; but they've been allowed to suck the River dry 3 times in 10 years, & the last time they accomplished this feat of Technological Progress the river didn't go to the Ocean for 5 years consecutively!

HISTORY:-

There are three facets to this one, Personal, National, & Global. Personally, one is almost 50 & grew up in a "Social Black-Hole" where time moved more slowly, & bad ideas took longer to filter in from "more civilised" places; if you'd prefer the story in verse then consult the first poem in the accompanying small book (I replaced Judith Wright, as Poet-In-Residence, at the Armidale Environment Centre, in 1998, y'see!).

HISTORY (Continued);

In 1948 my father bought a holiday House at Red Rock, so apart from having been conceived there in 1960, I spent the first 18 years of my life going to the coast for a fortnight roughly every 4 months; it was like Time-Lapse Photography, I watched the Estuary dying in distinct stages under the relentless impact of modern Australians. Every year less water in the river as the siltation worsened, every year less fish mixed with the water that's left due to "square-hooks" used illegally at night-time, if not from the permanent fringe of baited hooks on lines - sewing the water to the shoreline every weekend & school-holiday.

Adding what I saw onto what my Father had to say about the changes he'd seen since 1943, it was clear by the end of Primary-School that my environment was being destroyed by advancing civilisation; then I went to Boarding-School, first at Armidale & then at Bowral. Armidale had been settled during the Sheep-Wars maybe 25 years before Glen Innes, and the extra time showed up in extra environmental degradation; then "New England Dieback" hit the trees in my home-country, and before the Drought culled the Leaf-eating Insects (overbred at the time after DDT in the Food-Chain thinned all the birds' eggs into near-extinction before it was banned), everybody around hereabouts became quite frightened at the skeletal landscape. Finally, after a few years, vast swathes of the apparently-dead trees suddenly burst into radial-regrowth; and Bowral was probably 50 years more settled & thereby devastated than Armidale, so it made a nice comparison.

On one excursion we visited the one remaining Hectare of Temperate Rain-forest, at Robertson, all that's left of the landscape which covered the "Southern Highlands" from the Eastern Escarpment to the Western Watershed stretching from about Camden to Goulbourn; before it was all cleared for Dairy farms, due to the high rainfall. But when the forest was cleared the rainfall declined, to stabilise after 60 years at 40% of what it used to be, before the progress of Agriculture began in the district. Traintrips from Bowral to Glen Innes & back, 4 times per year, so as to spend the Holidays at Red Rock noting the new damage & absences - all re-inforced the perception; and the dysjunction between Biology & Economics has always been a worrying fascination, due to the Biologists being unquestionably well-informed and enlightened by documentation & measurements & historical records - but they're in charge of meticulously charting the demise of Life On Earth, objectively & powerlessly.

Meanwhile it's the Economists, with their self-inflicted Illuminated Tunnel-Vision, using "Rationalisation" & "Denial" with greatest of pride, while explaining their views (despite these being "the two most pathological Ego-Defence Mechanisms in the Psychiatric Textbooks!"); who are in charge of trashing the Planet, racing to undercut each other, in a global tragedy-of-the-commons.

To take my mind off it I went Flying, but altitude allows one to look down & see all the destruction at once, as well as seeing all the things that are hidden from the roads at ground-level; kind of a 360-degree & 3-dimensional version of a railway-traveller's privileged-glimpses into stranger's back-yards, so I gave up the aeroplanes & went Nursing. After 5 years, the bad-back struck.

At the time I was renting a 5-bedroom house on 1500 Acres for \$15/wk, it was an abandoned Sheepfarmers'-house on a Mining-Lease, 5 miles out of Emmaville because I'd been Charge-Nurse at the Vegetable Creek Hospital; so there one was, stuck in a Poverty-Trap & surrounded by sheep on the landscape with a radio but no TV, with not much to do but ponder the mystery of what the rest of Humanity thought it was doing. And why they were doing it anyway !

HISTORY (Continued);

Since retiring -, I've paid rates for 20 of the years on an Endangered Species Sanctuary; and while the NSW NPWS declared their Booroolong Frogs were "Biologically-extinct" in 1998, I came out of the Drought last year with a free-range herd of at least 100,000, and they've bred about 3 times since then. The secret is to use Trespassing Sheep for Archery-Practice, whereupon the Australian Landscape will commence to recover; my neighbour enthusiastically repairs the fences to contain his vermin (he runs a sheep to the acre on 1500 acres of Table-land Traprock, plus 50 cattle!), and stop them treading on frogs attempting to hibernate the drought away - in the mud around the waterholes.

I live in a moist regrowth-forest, there's no more rabbits/acre on my place than the neighbours - but he lives on a stony rockscape, which flash-dries unless it rains every 3 days... my side goes 3 months before becoming dry enough to burn. After 19 Years I had a visit - for one day - from a wild free-range Koala, he camped in a tree 75metres from my camp; the local Choughs led me to him, otherwise I wouldn't have noticed... Thus, I can tell you that the "Dollar-Cost" of acquiring habitat fit for a Koala to visit -from dawn to dark, once - is \$40,000 to buy the land, and pay rates for 19 years to rehabilitate the Eco-system (\$500/year), meaning it cost me \$49,500 over two decades for the day's thrilling, to the sight of the Koala.

There is no style or type of "farming" possible, on such a small holding of this landscape, which would break-even; but all such industrious futility would destroy the Life which is attempting to rehabilitate the land, after 150 years of already having been Farmed..... I was only able to afford it after it sent the past 3 farmers broke, & a Sub-Divisionist lost money selling my block to me; I've still got it because I haven't been silly enough as to spend money attempting to exploit, or profit, from living on tired land. Learn from that...!

HISTORY - National:-

There was a time when the "Onward & Upward March Of Civilisation", as epitomised by the European Colonisation, & Dominion, of less industrialised Nations & Cultures & Landscapes, was viewed as having been an unquestioned "Good Thing"; touted in terms of "improved productivity", and "improved lifestyle"; which the application of "Progressive" techniques have made possible... as it was.

A couple of decades of paying attention to Radio National on the ABC Network, & reading New Scientist, has altered the perception of the true nature of the "Achievements" that "European Civilisation" has wrought on the face of Australia; beginning with Crypto-Semantics again, "Euro" being of course "From Europe Comes" together with "Peon"... As spelt, that's a song of praise from an Angel; while phonetically it derives from "Peon", being a Latin term still in-use with the Spanish - meaning a "Landless, Ignorant, Peasant".

Such is the dichotomy between the Worldview wherein the Europeans brought Enlightenment, to the "Ignorant Savages"; and a more educated grip on the facts, freely available from the historical record, which tell a different story.

The first white-settlers in the New England Table-lands showed up from 1830-1850, at which time the worst-paid people in London were the Tailors, making Army Uniforms... they might make as much as 27 pennies per week, but after paying rent on sleeping-space and buying their candles & firewood - were lucky to have Sixpence per week for food... Bread & tea & sugar were the staples, it wasn't uncommon to live all year on less than a dozen kinds of food, anybody without money didn't eat; many people worked ten to twelve hours per day, six days per week, so it isn't hard to see why they jumped onto Ships going to Australia. It is hard to see why the Europeans thought they were in any way superior to the Aborigines; sailboat versus boomerang, which embodies the more advanced use of Aerodynamics....? Captain Cook was able to see that.
In 1770, Australians ate 368 different food-species over the year....!

History (Continued);

The people who lived where I now sit, 250 years ago, worked for 2 hours per day to supply themselves with food, shelter, & clothing; each person grazed on an acre per day, then came back to it after 3 years - being 1000 acres/ person.... about the same as today's farmers - they're the ones actually taking a living from the land, and it takes 4,000-\$,000 acres to feed Farmer Fred & the missus plus 2 kidlets-while maintaining the fences & equipment, without killing the topsoil. So, considering that whatever goes on in the towns & cities is but a phantasm of the economy, there's no more people living on & from the landscape now than there used to be..! Yet whereas the silt at the bottom of the Llangothlin Lagoon took 20,000 years, under Aboriginal land-management, to build up 0.35 metre deep; since Governor Arthur Phillip released the Sheep & Potatoes, the Euro-Peons have put another metre of dirt at the bottom of that lagoon due to accelerated erosion-rates.

The people who lived here kept whatever they made, & gave away 90% of whatever was hunted or gathered, so nobody went to sleep hungry no matter how bad a day they'd had; the wonderfully-progressive Euro-Peons' improved new way of life sends thousands of people to bed hungry & homeless, every sunset.

Europeans, in pursuit of the teachings of their Economists & Agroculturalists, have begun with feeding the food-plants to their livestock, followed by cutting down the forests, & shifting the topsoil to the bottom of the oceans, & riverbeds; all in the name of "improved productivity", being a cover-story for "increased profits" which apparently motivate those who believe in the "need" for endless-growth, of the economy.

I urge the gentle reader to ponder the story of the Western Australian Royal Commission in 1917, to consider the proposal to clearfell the forest surrounding Perth, for the planting of a vast belt of wheatfields; because that would obviously generate a lot of employment, and allow lots of people to make quite a lot of money, or so said the proponents..... Evidence was taken from a Professor of Soil-Chemistry, who testified to the Commission that while it was true that clearing the forest would allow successful wheat-crops to be harvested for 30-40 years - after 40-60 years the saline underground-water would rise up to sterilise the soil, because it was the salt-tolerant trees that were holding the saline-water too deep underground (by transpiration) for it to impact the roots of surface-feeding crops, in the top 2 metres (he said 6 feet) of the soil.... like wheat. He said, including a prediction that if they cut the forest down then Perth would have a choice between drinking Seawater or Sewage within 90 years; I first heard that story on ABC RN's Science Report in 1997, at the 80-year mark, and I think Perth's desalinating the ocean as I write this submission.....

The reason this was the outcome was that the Royal Commission told the Professor that they "Couldn't allow Scientific Prejudice (!) to stand in the face of Agricultural Progress....."; which is why (pardon the expression) the population of Perth are able to choose to drink sewage, or seawater, with informed consent.

Another story worth considering is that told by the UNE Professor of Anthropology, to the effect that 6 times in the past 10,000 years the Australians have tried to farm wheat, in the Hunter Valley in NSW; they cleared & sowed & harvested paddocks of the Native grasses, built permanent-dwellings with Mud-brick grain-silos, & progressed as far as little villages. But, then, every time they went so far as to have forgotten how to be nomads, the 200-yearly drought showed up; and that tribe died out. Also, 6 times in 10,000 years (maybe simultaneously ?) the people in the Marahoa country had repeated tries at becoming Aquacultralists, raising Eels in Billabongs & Ox-Bow Lakes; using

History (Continued);

trenches to & from the river, for fresh-water circulation, regulating water-levels by dropping rocks into (& pulling them out of) the channels & feeding the fish on pelletised-plankton, grown in a different pond (by cutting out two species of littler fish, betwixt the Plankton & the large fish, their food-chain became 10,000% more efficient - the Hawaiians were doing something similar when Captain Cook arrived there).... The same 200-yearly droughts, which killed-out the wheat-farmers, dried-up the rivers & channels & ponds; & wiped out the Aquaculturalists..... or so I heard on a Science-Report, on ABC Radio National, in 1996 or '97.

It's entirely possible that Broadacre Agriculture is not a sustainable option, if conditions suitable for Human Life are to be maintained, on the Continent of Australia; it isn't a joke, nor is it alarmist. All it'll take to find out would be to pull the Petroleum out of the equation or shut down the Power-Grid, maybe simply to deconstruct the Highway-network from pot-holes would be sufficient; probably, time will tell.

One wonders what proportion of the Australian population would be able to sustain life, if food was only available when locally grown & harvested & stored, & distributed by muscle-power; considering that most horses in Australia live on petroleum-grown & transported fodder, while the soil which grew Horse-feed prior to World War Two is either now under the Suburbs, the rivers, or the oceans, except where it's decorating Snowcaps in New Zealand.... one doubts that going back to horses will be an option.

Something which might be workable would be small-plot subsistence Vegetable-gardening, to eke out something like a baseline dietary-intake, in between efforts to rebuild a functional Lifestyle from whatever the Economy leaves behind, when it departs; but, all that does depend on regular rainfall, and the entire inland of NSW, South-Queensland, & Victoria through to South Australia.... depends on a healthy Murray-Darling Basin.

If the Irrigation-Communities are permitted to pursue their Dollar-driven & Market-Forces based plans, to extract a profit from every litre in the Riverbed, then the Scientific Evidence irrefuteably demonstrates that they shall kill the Basin; it'll become a dustbowl, decorated with salt-pans & skeletal trunks of leafless-trees, windblown & scarrified, intermittently drained by an otherwise dead sewage-ditch, where the river used to be. It isn't a threat, but it might be a Scientist's version of a promise...

When I pay my rates to watch the Megalitres flow under the downhill boundary-fences, there is an expectation of "secondary-gains"; in that I expect that water to nourish wetlands & forests all the way to the Western & Southern beachline, my return-harvest is reaped when the plants transpire & the ponds evaporate - thus humidifying the Westerly-Winds, after they blow hot & dry out of Central-Australia but before they arrive at the Western Slopes of the Great Dividing Range. The plan is to sit here, just below the watershed, & be rained-upon by my own recycled Western-Runoff; when the system's in good condition something like 40% of the rain I receive comes from the West, & more than half of it comes from evapo-transpiration out of the Darling Basin, not much floats all the way cross-continent, from the Indian Ocean-direct.

So, while the Scientific Evidence is that almost half the MDB Water-Allocations must be revoked & the water returned to the Environment, reclaimed from the Irrigationists who've been stealing it; the Economic/Agrocult-ists are all howling & wailing in protest, like lunatics in the moonlight, incensed that they might be prevented from continuing to conduct one of the worst examples of Environmental vandalism, in prospect, on the Planet at the moment.

History (Continued):

Globally speaking, with the exception perhaps of the Rainforest-Dwellers of South America, the proximate cause of the fall of every Civilisation that ever rose for the past 5,000 years has been unfettered Broad-acre Agroculture, following widespread deforestation, & generally intensified by irrigation.

One might joke that the Egyptian Economists preached upon the need for their Government to build a Tourist-attraction, which required the desertification of the Sahara, & Libya's ecology to be destroyed; all in the effort to grow enough Barley, to feed the Stonemasons, needed to build the Pyramids & the Sphinx... But it's all more or less too true to laugh at, including the not-so-minor point that something like half of all the Egyptians currently known to be employed are scratching a living by catering to the International Tourists; who still flock to gawp at the Pyramids, while paying no attention at all to the Desert it took to erect the masonry.

In Babylon they hit upon the concept of irrigating the desertifying landscape, when the rainfall commenced to diminish following deforestation - as it tends to do, and the trick held their Civilisation together, for a while; until the dissolved-salts, from the irrigation-water, sterilised their soil. Refugees from Babylon took progressive-notions to Greece, where Civilisation flourished until deforestation compelled Alexander The Great to conquer new lands, always seeking more; and when his administration died with him, it was the Romans with their "Latifundia" - broadacre farms operated with slave-labour - who wiped out their own ecology & then trashed Europe, to make up their perceived shortfalls. With Bows, Arrows, Nets, & Spears, the Roman Empire made Lions extinct; from the Mediterranean to Scotland and Portugal to Persia.

The Cambodians crashed their ecology around Ankor-Wat, the Mayans & the Incas & the Cacaxtlans did it in South America, from Peru to Mexico; the Long-Ears sailed from South America to Easter Island on Papyrus Rafts, the Reeds growing in the Crater-Lake at Easter Island are genetically-identical with the ones growing in Lake-Titicaca... Once they arrived they deforested the Island, but held their Culture intact; until the Polynesians arrived, & displaced them.

In every case, the pursuit of increased production, via the fantasy that Humans are capable of better managing the landscape than millions of years of Evolution/Godtheory-Implementation, has always & everywhere produced the same sequence of events; following an initial apparent success - allowing output to grow above what Nature would've provided, then, as the Ecology disintegrates it becomes unprofitable to sow further destruction as yields drop, finally the Economic Activity is abandoned in that area, & Nature attempts to repair the damage.

The favourite excuse has been the need to service the Mortgage, which may be why so many of the Religious Teachers from around the Mediterranean preach against the Charging or Paying of Interest, on loans; the Pharisees, the Zoroastrians, the Commandments Moses brought down to the Hebrews - all forbid what they called "the practice of Usury", because the Godtheory said it was so. Later on, the Hebrews were taught by Deuteronomy "not to Charge Interest to one's brothers", which became something of a loophole; other Jews could borrow freely, but all the Goyim would have to pay interest on loans..... Following which the Jews became rather rich, the landscape was despoiled as the economy prospered; and many of the tribes paying interest on loans, simultaneously, developed different strains of Anti-Semitism. Then, Jesus said all men are brothers!

About the time the Roman Empire was at it's peak, along toddles Joshua Ben-David, also known as Jesus, "the Christ" ("the Anointed" is what that means) who remains famous to this day; for throwing the Moneylenders out of the Temple

History (Continued);

of Solomon, they were charging interest on loans used to purchase animals & birds for sacrificing upon the Altar, and the Jesus-ish view was that the Usurious-transaction defiled the whole process - turning it into Blasphemy rather than Prayer. It's a logically-coherent viewpoint, but the Moneylenders had been paying plenty off taxes, to the Civil Authority; and their complaints duly caused Jesus to be executed, for his Orthodoxy.

For the following 600 years Christians despised the Jews as much for their breach of the Usury-Commandment as they did for their involvement in petitioning the Romans to execute Jesus, but then Mohammed began preaching in Arabia (heavily desertified!) against the evils of Usury; he said it turned the land into desert, and ruined the borrower's health, with overwork to the borrower & lack of Fallow-seasons for the Land.....Allah, too, forbids all Usury !

In order to differentiate themselves from the Moslems the Christians decided to tolerate those who paid interest, while it was still considered sinful to charge interest; and meanwhile, it became fashionable for the City-States on the Italian Peninsula to allow a small "Ghetto" of Jews to exist around the City Wall, the Jews would then grow rich from their wicked Usurious practices, and their income-stream could be duly taxed to support the treasury, and pay the militarists to behave themselves.

By the time Shakespeare was writing his Merchant Of Venice, the Church was coming to terms with the fact that Europe's Economy had been based on Interest-paying Loans (disguised as International Currency-transactions) for centuries; there wasn't any way of winding that Genie back into the bottle, the Renaissance occurred instead, and Europe discovered The Americas awaiting plunder & pillage, with Expeditions funded by speculative investors using borrowed money, with their loans insured.....

There's 5,000 years of evidence to the effect that allowing an individual, or a community of individuals, to vandalise the Environment so as to pay their debts is a completely reprehensible idea. It's a more functional option to pay such individuals not to try to "make a living", by "working hard"; if all they're able to think off is some foolish scheme to make everything worse, so long as they make their repayments for a few more years.....

Conclusions:-

Give the Irrigationists exactly what they've asked for! They want all the decisions to be based upon "Social & Economic Evaluations of Human-Impact, rather than giving over-riding concern to Environmental-factors."; I believe that's a fair summary of what they're demanding.....(?).

Therefore, considering that it's clearly better to cut back Irrigation by 50% immediately and accept that half the irrigators will need to be paid to be unemployed (until they dream up something else to do with their Lifetime that does make sense), rather than allowing them to persist for another decade until they kill the entire Basin - and they're all Unemployed anyway; simply explain to them that it's PRECISELY because of the Economic & Social-implications that they have to be stopped, now! Half of them on the Dole, right now, beats having everybody from the Blue Mountains to Alice Springs dying off thirst; after the Irrigation-Community makes yet another Desert, chasing their profit-fantasies!

Why else d'y' think we've got such a Mining-Boom at the moment, if not to feed enough royalties to the Government that Australia can choose to pay the Dole, to all the unemployed Irrigationists ? It's a better use of the cash than playing Hopscotch, on the Minefields of Absurdistan; which is where it's being otherwise wasted, just now. So, you-all; please be brave, get this right !

Yours Faithfully

Torbay Column

by Richard Torbay
Member for Northern Tablelands

Solar tariff backflip is overkill

THE NSW Government has taken a sledgehammer to the state's fledgling solar industry by removing powerful incentives for business and householders to sign up. Last week's sudden policy back flip slashed the gross feed-in-tariff from its current 60 cents per kilowatt hour to 20 cents. The new rate applies to new installations but does not affect existing participants in the state's solar bonus scheme. It's an overcorrection and as a result NSW has gone from having the best incentive scheme in the nation to the worst. The government has panicked over the recent electricity price hikes and has hit out at the Solar Bonus Scheme to recoup some of the cost. It's an overreaction and will have a devastating effect on the solar industry in this state. Better policy would be to make gradual changes to the feed-in-tariff, giving the industry and solar consumers time to adjust.

Community transport system needs an overhaul

THE regional Community Transport system needs a comprehensive review as there are many inequities and anomalies in the way the services are delivered in country regions compared to the city. I spoke on this issue in Parliament, calling for an overhaul to address the best interests of transport-disadvantaged people who use the system to access to health and other social services. The funding formula requires revision and should be based on the kilometres travelled and not just the number of trips which occurs at present and disadvantages rural services. The system in rural areas should be less reliant on a declining number of volunteers who are being overloaded with extra responsibilities and personal financial imposts. In metropolitan areas all drivers are paid. An integrated customer centred model has been trialled successfully by Tablelands Community Transport in our local area. TCT is promoting the use of 50 per cent taxi vouchers and local school buses when they are not in use to deliver a boost for local business and provide the flexibility clients are seeking.

Extra \$300,000 for community infrastructure projects

THE number of local infrastructure projects to be funded under the Community Building Partnership Scheme (CPBS) will almost double through a further \$300,000 injection to the scheme from the state government. I welcome this extra funding which will extend the original allocation of \$400,000 for this year's round to \$700,000. This is one of the most far sighted community grant programs the government has introduced.

Tell us what's on your mind

Preference is given to short letters up to 300 words. Include your name, address and a daytime contact phone number for verification. Letters may be edited.

Your Letters

For the greater good, let's go back to the polls

INTERVIEWED by Kerry O'Brien on ABC TV (August 22), Independent Federal MPs gave the impression that Federal Parliament is an out-of-date institution.

But in what sense is Federal Parliament out of date? Parliament is more than that. In the words of Edmund Burke (1729-1797), Parliament is 'an assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole'.

That is why we need a follow-up Federal Election as soon as possible.

Dr Paul Fidlon
ARMIDALE

Vandals on the rise in Deepwater

How sad it is that although so many things in Deepwater are looking up there is still an element that wishes to bring it down.

Vandals and exhibitionists are on the rise again. After a relatively long time of 'peace', a small group of people still have eruptions of mindless stupidity. 'Mooning' on-coming trucks, smashing lights and bricks, tearing up plants and throwing eggs at houses, I expect that boredom and excessive drinking are the causes of such behavior, either that or these people are irrevocably stupid. Some of these people are in their twenties and should have grown up by now. Lets hope that this spate of bad behavior is soon stopped before it escalates. Sometimes these seemingly mindless 'pranks', can cause real distress to the recipients and bring an otherwise lovely little town down.

Deborah Furmer-Anderton
DEEPWATER

In support of the environment

PERSONALLY I speak as one of the people who pays an annual price to put water into the Murray-Darling Basin, and my intention is to nourish the landscape, its biology and ecology. Thus, to benefit the environment.

Rates on 40 hectares, just one kilometre west of the watershed means that 30 to 40 megalitres of water falls within my boundaries. At the moment there's four megalitres in the top soil and 600,000 litres in a trio of dams. Being a regrowth forest, ungrazed by hard-footed animals for 20 years, it takes at least 10 mm before anything runs off. But, to balance that, the top soil storage keeps the dams

fuller for longer, so once runoff begins it continues for an extended period.

So, I'm happily watching between five and 20 megalitres flow under my downhill boundary, that water to be 'wasted', unless perhaps some profit-driven dingbat decides to steal the water from the river basin and pump it out all over their dollar fantasies.

In pursuit of those irrigated dollar fantasies, these above-mentioned 'irrigation communities' have sucked the river dry, so that it failed to reach the ocean (a fundamental and basic test of 'riverhood'), three times in these past 10 years. Last time they achieved this feat of technological progress the alleged river failed to flow into the ocean for five consecutive years.

There is no rational argument available to sustain the belief that profit-driven or debt-based plans should allow individuals, or communities, to suck a river system dry, regardless of how much money they wanted to extract from the exercise. Because if allowed to proceed for another decade then the entire Murray-Darling Basin will have turned into a dead and bare wasteland, and all the perpetrators will be unemployed. Better to put half of them on the dole right now.

Thus, it would make much more sense, at the moment, to scale back the volume of water being pumped out of the river. First, in order to maintain the flow-rate so as to at least reach the ocean, than it does their technology in the hope that they might then pump less water out of the river. Because history teaches us that each improvement simply allows larger crop yields.

DM

C Wharton
SOUTH DUNDEE

Labor/Greens Government a nasty arrangement

Betrayed?

Many in the federal New England electorate would feel betrayed with the events of the past couple of months.

Personally I have considered that we are fortunate in this electorate with options apart from the major parties but as many I feel that option has now been taken away.

Personally I feel the Labour / Green coalition that now governs our country to be a particularly nasty arrangement and can see little good coming from it.

The rains of the past few months have been wonderful but sadly most of the excess water has flowed or will flow out to sea. The 40 - 60 billion dollars proposed to be spent on broadband could drought proof this country and provide a lasting infra-structure of great value to future generations.

Many believe that broadband cabling system will have been outdated with new technology before

the roll out has been completed, but for me the most concerning aspect is what the broadband will be used for. I understand that in excess of 90% of its use will be for the speedy low cost down load of movies, many of the movies contain pornography, drug abuse, blasphemy, bad language etc and can only further contribute to the moral and spiritual decay now happening in our society.

Our leaders seem incapable in many instances of making wise and prudent decisions and now by adding the Greens to the mix, can only further reduce the possibility wise and moral outcomes.

As the situation is now, one can only hope that these Independents will remember who put them there and endeavour to carry out their wishes and put aside their own personal opinions or biases.

Reg Tretthewey
DEEPWATER

Thank you for your support

ON BEHALF of St Patrick's Parish Play Group I would like to thank everyone who attended our Girls Arvo Out on Saturday October 23, 2010 to help us raise awareness and much needed funds in the fight against women's cancers.

Our day was a fantastic success and we raised a total of \$1821. This would not of been possible without the generosity of the local business houses, stallholders, the Bain Sisters, our Playgroup Mums, Carers and Grandparents.

Also a big thank you must go to our hosts on the day Joanne and Adam Anderson for the hard work they put into their beautiful garden.

A wonderful afternoon was had by all and thank you again for all involved and for supporting a very worthy cause.

Leeanne McHarg
GLEN INNES

Anxiety and Depression Awareness Month growing

As Anxiety and Depression Awareness Month draws to a close, I would like to thank the thousands of people who participated with beyondblue and organised activities in their communities.

We distributed more than 130,000 information kits to businesses, organisations and individuals to help raise awareness of depression and anxiety, and encourage people to talk openly about the illnesses.

This is the fourth year that beyondblue has promoted Anxiety and Depression Awareness Month in October and we're encouraged by the ever increasing community involvement in helping us to raise awareness and break down stigma. There is however, no time for complacency. Now we've started

talking more openly about mental health, it's vital we continue the conversation to encourage people to seek help.

Depression and anxiety are common and potentially serious conditions that can affect anyone at any time. If it's not you, it could be someone you know.

It's important to remember that help is available and with the right treatment, most people recover.

So thank you to everyone who helped make Anxiety and Depression Awareness Month a success - and let's continue talking all year round.

For more information about depression, anxiety and related disorders, and where to get help, call the beyondblue info line on 1300 24 636 or visit www.beyondblue.org.au.

Leonie Young
CEO, beyondblue
HAWTHORN WEST, VIC

Vote of thanks

We would like to give a big thank-you to Matt Henny, Ron Weber and Katrina for a lovely and well-organised trip to Coff's Harbour on October 21 and 22.

The itinerary was very well set out and ran like clockwork.

A bus load of 20 senior citizens were taken on the trip, these people consisted of clients and volunteers. It was so lovely to see everyone happy and enjoying themselves, especially at the Pet Porpoise Pool.

All of you people who are sitting at home and not doing anything, consider coming along to the Garden Court on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday and join in some of the activities which are available and this will enable you to be eligible to join any future trips which may become available.

I would like to add that we have lovely home cooked meals on the above days for just \$6.50, so why not come along and make some new friends and enjoy yourselves. Thankyou also to Suzie Dunn for allowing these trips to go ahead. See you on the next trip.

Norella Penman and
Edna Cattell
GLEN INNES

Corrections

The Glen Innes Motor Sports Club has been running and helping to promote road safety within the local community for the past 26 years, not two years as the article in last Thursday's Examiner stated.

They are also affiliated with ANDRA the Australian National Drag Racing Association, not ADRA as stated in last week's article.

Also local Alpaca breeder Betty Whitten would like to clarify that she was responsible for recording and cataloguing entries at the recent Australian Alpaca Show and Sale at Tamworth, not judging as suggested.

Our people



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manager.glenexaminer@ruralpress.com
editor.glenexaminer@ruralpress.com
ben.lomergan@ruralpress.com
sales.glenexaminer@ruralpress.com
classifieds.gleninnes@ruralpress.com

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General Manager Jenny Baldwin
Manager Lisa Reed
Editor Ben Lomergan
Debbie Petersen
Irene Penn
Ralph Penn

News - Sport
Advertising
Classifieds Admin.
Photographer
Glen Innes,

Examiner

Phone: 02 6732 1666 Address: 124 Bourke Street, Glen Innes. Mail: PO Box 249, Glen Innes. Fax: 02 6732 2544