



To the House of Representatives Standing Committee,

I would like to make some comments and share my thoughts about the proposed cuts to water allocations.

I am a 4th generation citrus farmer in the Leeton district of NSW. My great grandfather (my grandfather being one of his sons) settled in the Whitton district in May 1915. They paid £50 (pound) for the 52 hectares and had to fence the land, grow the produce and be self sufficient, which they did. My father took over that very farm, and my twin brother from him. My older brother, my sister, myself and our families currently all farm in the district.

My daughter is a 5th generation Davidson, living in the township of Leeton and is working in the health sector. Her job may be lost because of cuts to water allocation- an indirect flow-on effect of this proposed 'plan'.

I'm not a big believer in way politicians and bureaucrats throw out the term 'climate change'. Australia has a history of periods of drought, and periods of heavy rainfall and flooding. We must accept that these circumstances are cyclical, out of our control and bound to happen at some point in the future.

More water storage and dams needs to be built. It has been established that over the recent drought period, if we did not have these dams, the rivers would have surely run dry. Dams regulate water flow. What is happening to all the water now in our current period of flooding? This water could be harvested and stored. Water storage could be built along the entire length of the Murray Darling basin system, water stored and then released into the rivers at a later stage. The environment only responds to floods when water spills out of the river and over the banks. Simply releasing water down the river, whether it is $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ full does not have a large impact on the ecosystem. Look at all the wildlife that appears after flood- this is nature at her best.

More piping of irrigation water should be happening to provide towns with water in times of drought. Our major cities are growing larger every year, but why is the building of new dams and infrastructure **not** being invested in? Melbourne's population is increasing faster than Sydney's but no new dam has been built. THEY would rather take the water from irrigators who produce a huge percentage of the nation's food. Such capital cities should be capturing the storm water and storing it.

The Lower Lakes, what can I say? THEY want irrigators to be more efficient, which we are always striving for and doing. Okay, so take the water off irrigators and release it down to the Lower Lakes in South Australia. Save water in one area, but let it go up in evaporation in another- that doesn't seem like good management to me.

Here in the MIA our drainage and flood water flows into Barren Box swamp near Griffith, NSW. This swamp was sectioned off and about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the area captures the water. The next is there for spill over if it is needed. Why can't this be done in the Lower Lakes? Murrumbidgee Irrigation have saved 20,000ML of water which went back to the environment.

Speaking of the environment, since 1995, high security and general security irrigators have donated 5-15% of their allocation back to the environment and we pay the fixed charges on that water. This fact has not be acknowledged by the MDBA.

Let do dome practical things along the Murray Darling system- make a long term plan. We, as sensible Australians, both country and city dwellers, can work together to help the environment ***and*** help those who feed the nation.

Sincerely,
Peter Davidson