



To Tony Winsor chairman and committee,

I have been irrigation farming here for more than fifty years. My great grandfather left Millicent in South Australia in 1880 for the Riverina after a disastrous wet winter, where he lived near Deniliquin NSW for four years. After an equally disastrous drought, he left for Tasmania where he finally became a successful farmer. He lived to see the drainage schemes for the many swamps and low lying land in the South East district of South Australia eventually succeed in opening up farming there, but where does this water now run to? the sea, not the Coorong.

It seems so ironic personally to me that after coming to the Deniliquin district in 1955 with my family to a safe irrigation district, the water shortages of the past years and now a Murray Darling Basin Plan, irrigation here could be restricted in such an unfair way to handle the distribution of water in the Murray Darling.

We live in one of the irrigation districts closest to the storages, with the least losses in delivery, it seems strange that such a wasteful use of water to use two thousand gigalitres of water or two thirds of the Hume Dam just to keep the Murray mouth open, where the opening of the barrage at Goolwa, and other measures, would achieve the same result. Another curious plan by so called environmentalists is the wish to keep the Lower Lakes with its huge evaporation losses, full of fresh water.

South Australia got a wonderful deal before Dartmouth was built. They had to be talked out of a dam at Chowilla South Australia which was to have huge evaporation losses, in

return they got this wonderful deal, finishing up with more water than we ever have had lately. For them to say that they use water in a more efficient way in high value horticulture, so should not have to contribute towards the environment is misleading. Plenty of us here on suitable land could do that too if we went into horticulture, therefore I think they should bear the pain of any water shortages too. I realize most of their water for their prosperity has to come from the Murray, fair enough but we are in the same boat too with not much to float it on, we just want a fair process to sort this out, there has been too much noise from the lower lakes people, what about us?

We could turn our water allocation high security, 65% of our existing allocation, and see whether we could make a profit in whatever we choose to grow. With long term bank loans ahead of them, farmers like any business need certainty, this has not happened. A lot of money has been spent on upgrading farm layouts through landforming and recycling of water, in fact you will see that the majority of irrigation now has been done under these improvements, this money has not yet been recouped, is part of our debt.

The last few years has seen a lot of irrigators in the Southern Riverina and Northern Victoria on shaky ground financially through no fault of their own in most cases. Over the last twenty years competition policy in succeeding governments has been a blunt instrument, to keep inflation down, to stop wage pressures. Sometimes in the name of productivity we have been hurt not helped.

The water quality issues for Adelaide too are easily fixed, if they aren't already. It seems to me that people who

live in their concrete jungles in the city have been blitzed by a propaganda campaign from those who aren't fair dinkum conservationists at all, but people such as tourism operators and fresh water fishermen on the lower Murray. They should make up their mind whether they want water for the true environment or for themselves which is what we are being told to do.

Some scientists have called the three or four thousand gegalitres a good start, and really want seven thousand, **fair go**. I think the people in the city who want to have nice holidays in an unspoilt country side should be thinking about why farmers are jumping up and down about their future, they are the ones who are going to have to feed them and an overpopulated world.

I am tired of hearing farmers being characterised as greedy irrigators who don't care about the environment, I too know about such things as global warming caused by carbon in the atmosphere, the need for biodiversity, and also know what ecology means, I have had to keep the peace by saying nothing while anti greens have their say, not that I vote green.

I think city polluters who are the main contributors toward the green hous effect, are passing the buck for the environments problems of the world to an easy target, the so called bad irrigation farmers, who are trying to make a living the same as they are. I bet people in the city are divided the same proportions as country voters, in the concern for the environment. We have already done our bit for the environment, just need a few good years to get on our feet again.

Instead of taking the easy way out by taking water from so called willing sellers I think the people of Australia should be made to face up to the possible coming water supply problems coming from global warming, or variations in the weather (whatever turns you on) and spend real money now on engineering solutions to any problems, in the Murray Darling system, and look after the environment too.

John and Esther Waters