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Tony Windsor MP
Chair
Review Committee of MDBA
Parliament House
Canberra.

Regarding Murray Darling Basin River Dilemmas.

Dear Tony

Tony You and I had a meeting in Tamworth a very long time ago in Wal Murray's time, we primarily discussed what mismanagement that was occurring along the Namoi with regulated and groundwater so it is most pleasing to see you have stepped forward to do what you can, in this matter.

The Namoi is not a major contributor to the woes of the MDBA in addressing the sustainable future of the MDB.

It seems the gain from the Namoi sought is 1/3rd of 1%. Efficiency gains in farm water supplies from the river and system improvements along the Gunidgera creek, a branch stream that rejoins the Namoi above Walgett, below the Gunidgera Regulator could far exceed that amount in a win/win for all.

It remains virtually in its natural state and meanders for many kilometres.

The lower end of this section serves no irrigators, the open creek meanders for many more kilometres and below Dundee Weir it is used twice a year to put stock flows down, these should be piped, using 15metre creek beds to flow small quantities of water is ridiculous as we address this problem, the evaporation rates and soakage must be enormous.

It is claimed that over allocation caused this dilemma, I contend that is not so, volumetric allocation did. When it replaced area allocations. Some irrigators planted up to 500% of their former area entitlements in years they thought there was a chance of declaration of off-allocations, these were unlimited events, only limited to a place to put it and pump capacities. In 1984 309 days was declared off allocation, in the Namoi.

There was also Special Additional licenses and Authorities issued, however under the off-allocation management the Authorities never maintained records of their

diversions and treated them as off allocation, because Special additional had limits of flow heights of 4.5 metres before they could be accessed, and off-allocations at about two metres.

This is the only valley in the system with two classes of off allocation resulting, A, priority, based on their history of use, up to their pumping capacity, and B, flow assessed by State Water, based on the remnants after A class allotments and a small% allocated to them, frequently too small to get to the respective properties, and often not pumped until a worthwhile event occurs, if and when it occurs, again based on history of use, not consistent with other valleys.

This matter requires urgent review and attention and brought into line with other MDB streams, where all off allocation events are shared equally across all regulated license holders, the Namoi is the sole one that has this class distinction, there is no place in this MBD system for that to be maintained. We are all equal, not some more equal than others, irrespective of historic practices.

This era is post squatters/ settlers and this matter needs urgent review.

That these license holders once had that liberty to unlimited off allocation is no reason that the resource has not to be shared equally now, quite the contrary it is paramount that B class get their fair share, to augment their access and may be carry forward some head water flows to optimise the stream, the system, and the objects of the MDBA for the MDB overall benefit. Many accumulative small savings added to such major ones as the revamp of the Menindee Lakes will address the well being of the MDB.

Tony, upstream of Menindee lakes the Namoi and other streams without, significant wet lands, make significant contributions with stream flows and periodic flooding, however we need to see works undertaken on infrastructure to improve efficiency.

The Macquarie and Gwydir traditionally recharge their wet lands, and only discharge trickles into the system as they drain.

It should be an objective to use head water waters last for the benefit of the three objectives of the MDBA Act

Those headwater are the hardest to restore.

Peter W Redfern