



Dear Sir or Madam

I live in Coonabarabran and was unable at short notice to make it to the hearing.

I would like to make a few points from someone who has been a landholder, living in the Basin for the last 35 years (recently retired).

* "Most inland rivers are in poor ecosystem health and the condition of wetlands continues to decline. This is mainly due to drought, water extraction and altered flow regimes." (NSW State of the Environment Report, DECCW, 2009) We may have had excellent rain recently and drought is not a factor at the moment. This does not alter the facts of water over-extraction and altered flow regimes. Deterioration will continue to occur unless a Basin Plan is put in place to address these two facts.

* Setting the amount of surface water destined for the environment at anything less than 4000 GL/y is a recipe for disaster. It will be a waste. It is insufficient for river health and economic health depends on environmental/river health. The lessons of history are there. The Garden of Eden was at the confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates in the Middle East. Overallocation of water occurred there and the result is the desert we now see.

* The purchase of water for the environment will be of little value at the extremes of drought and flood. Environmental water in effect returns some of the smaller flood events to the river in more normal years. These have been stripped from the river by the presence of dams and river regulation and need to be returned.

* Change is inevitable and should be seen as an opportunity in disguise. Small towns have been on a downward trend for decades. The causes are complex and not dependent on scrapping the Basin Plan.

* Irrigators are resilient, they will cope. Those with entrepreneurial skills who are committed to the social health of the Basin, can welcome other types of jobs to the Basin, especially in the area of sustainable energy generation (wind and solar) and similar new technologies if supported by good government policy.

* Irrigators and their representatives are well organised and financed. Those of us who disagree are in the majority but are not heard.

The cost of doing nothing is too high a price to pay. A strong Murray-Darling Basin Plan is the only way to provide hope for a sustainable future.

Yours faithfully

Jane Judd