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Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to express my worries with relation to the proposed Murray Darling Basin Plan.

I am a single mother who has been farming independently for 18 years. I have raised my two children on the farm – both of whom have been forced to leave this area because lack of employment – a direct result of the drought. I have also been forced to gain some off farm employment to prop up my farming business. This has involved re-educating myself to place myself in a position where I could actually gain other employment.

My stressors are enormous – financial; trying to run a farm and work a job and study has created enormous time pressures (I am physically, emotionally and mentally exhausted); trying to assist children who have been forced to move and can't as yet cover the full cost of living away from home; worry about my future financial state; worry about failure; worry about my extended family and neighbours who are in a similar position. I have seen our local school closed, local businesses have closed as a result of the drought, people have been forced to move away. Farming communities are being lost.

You must walk a mile in another man's shoes before you can understand his troubles. I don't think you have any concept of the severity of our troubles and the implications of reducing our water allocations. It will decrease the value of our assets as well as our earning potential. It's not as though we are huge earners anyway – just honest people who love the land, who care for the land and are doing the aussie thing of 'having a go'.

The implications on our mental health will be enormous. You must not ignore this! We are at the end of our rope. We have hung on for 10 years, have seen a light at the end of the tunnel, to have it go dark again!

The plan must be scrapped.

I keenly await your response.

Sincerely,
Judith Murray