

Socio-Economic Assessment of Murray-Darling Basin Submission Template

Submission Number 020

1. What organisation (if relevant) are you from?
[REDACTED]

2. Please enter your first name
[REDACTED]

3. Please enter your email
[REDACTED]

Bring communities back to the heart of conversations and action that decide their future

This section encompasses the following categories:

- Governments must rebuild community trust in water reform, and lead from the front
- Current funding is not enough to support community led transitions for Basin communities impacted by water reform
- Socioeconomic neutrality criteria should be accompanied by a process to provide flexibility for communities to move to less water dependent futures where communities request this

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Panel's key findings and recommendations, and why? Please provide as much detail as possible.

Unfortunately from the very beginning of the report there is a major contradiction. Yes towns like Yarrawonga and Shepparton are going okay due to size and increase in diversity of businesses HOWEVER the remaining 38 towns on the Victorian side of the river are in a dire position. All of these towns add to the countries economy and if you don't absolutely acknowledge what is unravelling that is an incredible amount of people that are also going to be requiring govt income support - especially now that the COVID-19 is ravaging the economy

5. Are there any significant gaps? What are we missing?

By the panel expressing that basin communities support water reform this gives the public outside the MDB the false belief that what has and continues to occur in the basin is beneficial for the nation - which it is not. Why were only 2 local panel members at the meetings in Barooga, Deniliquin and Shepparton. Apparently only a very few meetings actually had the complete panel in attendance. Excuse - we are hearing the same information at every meeting. YES YOU ARE BUT YOU ARE ALL NOT INDIVIDUALLY SITTING THERE LISTENING TO FARMERS AND COMMUNITIES EXPRESS THEIR CONCERNS.

6. If implemented, do you think our recommendations would make a difference or have a benefit to you and/or your community?

No. \$2B was invested with the view to reducing the irrigation footprint. Whoever thought that it was okay to allow the downstream investment

Meet the pressing needs of First Nations

This section encompasses the following categories:

- More needs to be done to improve social, cultural and economic outcomes for First Nations communities

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Panel's key findings and recommendations, and why? Please provide as much detail as possible.
 Having attended meetings and listened to First Nation community members views I do not think that the Panel have listened. The Rivers have run dry - due to massive flood plain harvesting and the destruction to the Barmah Choke is not being addressed and cannot be addressed until everyone in water reform acknowledges that it is a river NOT a supply channel to Sunraysia, SA etc. AGAIN: Why were only 2 local panel members at the meetings in Barooga, Deniliquin and Shepparton. Apparently only a very few meetings actually had the complete panel in attendance. Excuse - we are hearing the same information at every meeting. YES YOU ARE BUT YOU ARE ALL NOT INDIVIDUALLY SITTING THERE LISTENING TO FARMERS AND COMMUNITIES EXPRESS THEIR CONCERNS.
8. Are there any significant gaps? What are we missing?
 The apparently arrogance at not having a full panel in attendance at every meeting held across the GMID. People came out to share their stories and attempt to make the panel realise what is happening on the land and to be only given 2 local panel representatives is disgraceful.
9. If implemented, do you think our recommendations would make a difference or have a benefit to you and/or your community?
 No. Anybody who is employed directly through irrigation farming and then the businesses and communities that rely on those farming businesses will see that the optimistic outlook that this report implies is infact a fallacy. Again - only 2 panel members in attendance. Surely the Chair should have attended all meetings. I cannot believe that these would be voluntary positions.

Implement water reform with greater care so potential harms are minimised

This section encompasses the following categories:

- From this point on, governments should match the pace of all further water recovery to the capacity of systems and communities to absorb and adjust change
- Basin communities need greater clarity around river operations
- The quality, timeliness and awareness of indicators related to wellbeing and the environment need to be better
- Research and innovation need more focus on helping farm businesses transition to flexible farming systems
- Moving towards more sustainable irrigation infrastructure

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Panel's key findings and recommendations, and why? Please provide as much detail as possible.
 2: - The panels recommendation is putting yet another nail in the Shep Irrigation Region & Sth Riverina coffin. Does the panel understand the seasonal flows of the rivers? The fish kills, the degregation of the choke and river structures and the ecosystems that have been destroyed. It also has to be reminded that irrigation farms are ecosystems in themselves and the environment that the govt and all these external reports refer to does not begin and end at the river!
11. Are there any significant gaps? What are we missing?
 If the entire panel had fronted up and listened at all the meetings we almost definately would not be getting asked this question.

12. If implemented, do you think our recommendations would make a difference or have a benefit to you and/or your community?

NO not until the panel understands what is at stake, what is occurring in the smaller towns and listening to people that made time to go to the meetings under the impression that we were going to be able to discuss with the socio-economic impacts with the PANEL not a couple of panellists.

Support the capacity of communities to adapt to change

This section encompasses the following categories:

- Basin communities need greater clarity around river operations
- The quality, timeliness and awareness of indicators related to wellbeing and the environment need to be better
- The Australia Government needs to further invest in regional connectivity in the Basin

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Panel's key findings and recommendations, and why? Please provide as much detail as possible.

If the Govt doesn't look to history to see what a complete success the Irrigation Scheme was and learn from it then they are going to have this disintegration of 38 small communities on the Victorian side of the Murray River. The impact that this is going to have on the welfare system will be immense. For every dairy farm the figure generally stated is that 6 people rely on their job from it. - tanker driver, factory staff etc. How many people further down the chain rely on the dairy factory and then follow that through to export earnings for Australia.

14. Are there any significant gaps? What are we missing?

15. If implemented, do you think our recommendations would make a difference or have a benefit to you and/or your community?

Address critical and urgent gaps in wellbeing, infrastructure and services

This section encompasses the following categories:

- The Australian Government needs to further invest in regional connectivity in the Basin
- Basin regions and towns facing acute social and economic issues needs immediate support

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Panel's key findings and recommendations, and why? Please provide as much detail as possible.

All the headings give a hope that maybe something worthwhile may come, however no. The report then goes on to treating the effects of. Intelligence should come at investigating agriculture that promotes what is the best utilisation of irrigation for the market economy. It seems to be that the Panel are looking at finding a cure instead of preventing what is happening. I would like to know if the Panel still feels its findings are sustainable since the collapse of the economy in this COVID-19 era. Australia needs to respect its water and respect what it grows.

17. Are there any significant gaps? What are we missing?

18. If implemented, do you think our recommendations would make a difference or have a benefit to you and/or your community?

It would adversely affect my community. My ability to support local businesses relies on my farm to have reliable and reasonably priced irrigation water.