

Socio-Economic Assessment of Murray-Darling Basin Submission Template

Submission Number 023

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.

I will comment on behalf of the communities in the southern irrigation districts and surrounds. From your findings, as usual, the MIA and surrounds the people you spoke to says there is a good confidence in general. I would bet this commentary comes from the likes of Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd (MI) and people closely associated with them who believe if they "toe" the line of MI they will get some sort of preferential treatment. IIOs are monopolies. I have no other ability to get water to irrigation my permanent plantings, they know this and they use this to their power to bully and override the majority of shareholders. MI claim to represent the 2500 land holders under their Area of Operations. I want to let you know that they do not represent us or share the views of the majority of farmers in the MIA. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. As you mentioned throughout your report basin communities are sick of inquiries, reports etc. We have fatigue and we are scared to speak out as we will be targeted by our IIO. The IIOs have the time and energy to well address all of these reports and inquires because in general people you are speaking to are paid. And paid from us the shareholders to give you a different view to what we really feel. I believe the majority of people in the basin do not understand the amount of corruption that has taken place since the inception of the plan, the Water Act and even going back to the creation of the Water Sharing Plans in 2000. It is fact that the MDBP is based on false science, the lower lakes are not fresh water. Take that out of the equation and things look very different immediately. SEcondly the MDBA are fully aware that environmental water purchased in most NSW river systems is re classified at trigger points along the rivers and is turned back into to irrigation water. Did you know that? I didnt till last year and Im an irrigator, Most irrigators dont know that, but some, very large, very wealthy people did and do and have bought properties in these areas years ago. The Management of the

MDBA is compromised and must go. I suggest you recommend a pause to this plan. And an independent person, the likes of a [REDACTED] be put in relook at this total arrangement.

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

The corruption all the way through the system. Take for example how can Water NSW (NSW governments water river operator) and Dept of Water NSW (policy makers) have two main stakeholder advisory groups. Do you know that the Websters General Manager of Water sits on those?? These are the groups that propose, amend, policy and the river ops?? You have the Fox in the hen house and no one says a word??

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

If implemented I think they would make a difference but we see time and time again this is not the case. If it was the case by now we would have seen Government cap in hand trying to work out a way through this issue with the NSW Murray irrigators who consumptive pool has been completely eroded because of the draining of Menindee Lakes, the rule changes around the Flood plain harvesting impacting the Darling and Menindee etc. The carryover rules that were increased during the Millennial drought thats impacted the consumptive pools in all valleys. The only advantage this has give is to those with the deepest pockets who ultimately can buy next years allocations. And its with Other Peoples Money (OPMS), investors money who have no idea what these corps are doing with it. MOney that was not derived from sales of those commodities. The obvious environmental damage caused to the Barhmah Choke. The unabated irrigation developments on cheap, unsuitable lands by large corporates....the list just goes one. The Voluntary Contributions (VCs) or Unvoluntary Contributions that we refer to them, where irrigators in the Murrumbidgee and Murray still pay the fixed charges on. The water was given up temporarily till the environment could get its own water entitlements - hence the Water Act 2007 which seperated water from land and it became a property right- but those VCs havent been given back to the landholders, its another class action just waiting to happen. Water reform for the past 20 years has been ad hoc, never properly transparent in any of their processes and large sectors have never had a seat at the table when these policies were made.

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.

yes I agree, especially along the Darling, it is disgraceful what water reform has done to these most vulnerable people of our nation.

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

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

Again, if seriously looked at round the table when making policy yes, but experience shows it doesnt.

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.

As mentioned earlier in irrigation districts they are either being ripped apart as water has been sold off due to their current industry appearing to the "inefficient" and not "highest value". Since when was Ag pigeonholed like this. We all know commodity prices have cycles, due to weather, markets, Government regulation and deregulation. This is simply transferring wealth the the wealthier at the cost of our communities, it is truly disgraceful.

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

IIOs do not have anyone to answer to. NRAR does not cover them under their jurisdiction for must issues. ACCC wont oversee them properly, they refuse to sign up to an ombudsman. They have added additional lands to their Areas of Operations by using loopholes in the regulations. The dept of Water NSW knows this but does nothing about it. I had a NRAR investigation into a development which Keelty is aware of and found everything i have said above ie NRAR themselves do not have juristriction on them, ACCC have done little to ensure they dont breech rules and regs. There are actually alot of people who have been severely effected by their actions and treatment but fear of speaking out.

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

Again id like to thinks so. Something I should add that representatives should be chosen by their peers to sit on boards, not the likes of suggestions of IIOs that happens now and only speak what the IIOs want them to say. Also I believe irrigator farmers need to have as many diverse people sit on these SAP and CAG stakeholder groups, quite often theres lucky to be one farmer and 4 reps from one Gov agency and theres usually about three gov agencies that sit on those groups too. I suggest you look at the SAP for the Dept of Water NSW who recently met regarding the Water Sharing Plans. See below:

[REDACTED]



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.

[I believe you need to pause the plan right now, get independant advice and start again. Firstly the whole MDB is poorly measured in real terms, this should be addressed first if we want to quote numbers.](#)

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.

[Same as what Ive said elsewhere.](#)

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?