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NATIVE VEGETATION INQUIRY
PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION
L132 Collins street East
Melbourne VIC 9003

TO COMMISSIONERS

In this submission to the Productivity Commission I will give a brief overview of the detrimental effect the Native Vegetation Act has on the ability of landholders to be able to selectively clear to rehabilitate the land affected by the very Invasive weed LIPPIA (*Phyla Canescens*).

- Lippia is an introduced plant which is highly competitive being able to dominate Native Pastures.
- Lippia seems to have an Allelopathic, Chemical effect which enhances its competitive ability with other species.
- Lippia can survive prolonged inundation as well as Drought.
- Lippia is unpalatable to stock and can reduce &c carrying capacity of *the* land up to 90%. Lippia is spreading at an alarming rate and for those *who do not have* the ability to selectively clear to be able to spray or cultivate face a very bleak financial future with the value of their land severely reduced and their earning capacity decimated.
- The deep rooting nature of *Lippia* dries out soil to some metres in depth. On cracking soils this leads to slumping of the stream or river bank. The increased erosion reduces water quality increasing turbidity and the risk of algal blooms, thus seriously affecting aquatic fauna and flora.
- The Murray Darling Basin Lippia Working Group was formed in July 2002 in response to on going concern about the rapid spread of Lippia and lack of effective control methods. The working group brings together landholders and representatives from State Government Agencies, Local Government; Research Bodies and Industry Groups.

A scoping study has just been completed by *Dr Judy Earl* of Agricultural Information and Monitoring Services to quantify the extent of the spread of Lippia as well as the economic and environmental impacts on individual farms, the rural community and our river systems in the Murray Darling Basin. This study when printed will be made available to the Productivity Commission.

The previous estimates by NSW Agriculture put the area affected in Murray Darling Basin at 800,000 hectares. The figure I believe the scoping study has come up with is 5,300,000 hectares and spreading at an alarming rate.

Landholders to be able to maintain Productivity in Lippia Affected country must have exemptions in the Native Vegetation Act to allow selective clearing to rehabilitate the land from this Imported Weed LIPPIA - Phyla Canescens.

Tony Woods

Chairman

MURRAY DARLING BASIN LIPPIA WORKING GROUP