

ATTENTION: **CHUCK L'HEUREUX**

SUBJECT: INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACTS OF NATIVE VEGETATION
PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION
LB2, COLLINS STREET EAST
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

IMPACTS ON THESE REGULATIONS ON LAND OWNERS WHO IRRIGATE IN THE
TINTINARA COONALPYN WELLS CATCHMENT AREA

1. Fanning practices have changed in the last twenty years in *this* area, from dryland farming to having a large *percentage of* irrigated area.
2. Landowners have made many compromises, adding *vegetation, purchasing* infrastructure for irrigation.
3. The purchase of infrastructure has been ideally designed to manage the irrigation with *efficiency to* water regulations which we are obliged to adhere to.
4. Family farms have proven to be viable. Good farming practices and commodity prices have had a balance. This has given growth to our local towns with job opportunities that have been filled by the next generation. The Levies which we are incurring at the moment are quickly taking the profit, with the uncertainty of where it will finish with both Departments.
5. The purchase of infrastructure is a very costly exercise. *To* look after our resource profits from irrigated crops have been invested back into these properties.
6. All irrigators in this area have a Volumetric Water Licence and are very aware of being efficient with all operations.
7. Pivot type watering requires 6 megs per hectare and flood irrigation requires 15-18 megs per hectare.
8. Irrigators are encouraged by the Water & Conservation to save water where possible by changing to over head watering to conserve the water. This is a very expensive exercise for irrigators who are willing. The problem *is* where there is one tree or a very few trees in the way of changing to a more efficient system. The Native Vegetation have not allowed the removal of those trees.
9. This does not help the situation to conserve water.

Land Owners are reluctant to plant too many trees because of the uncertainty of what regulations may occur in the future.

To save one old Mallee tree which will die in the next five years seems hard to leave in the way of infrastructure to save water. A group of new mallee trees with a future for the next thirty years in a corner of a paddock would benefit all concerned.

The Native Vegetation and Water Resources Departments have created extra bookwork, debatable decisions that are not always practicable to land owners.

The Native Vegetation and the Water Resources need to work toward the same objections. It should be reasonably easy for everyone to achieve the objective goals.

Landowners who have fanned for generations in the same area as we have, consider and know how to survive, with a commitment of seven days per week which in the past has been a life style and now is business practice to survive. It is hard to have a Department to always come up with the right answer from a person who has lived in either another state or a city instantly. Perhaps compromise from some of their good ideas with people with generations of knowledge must be the better way to go.

Our altimate goal is to save water, keep our natural vegetation where possible and leave the land we love in a viable way as we have fanned for the past forty years.

This submission is made by Reece and Chris McDonald

DR & CC McDONALD
SA
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