

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on the MDBP

I have Property in the Murray Valley that was once highly productive before the Government implemented the Murray Darling Basin Plan. The plan has been delivered from the top down with assumptions made that defy reality. With a large flood event just passed we can see that the best available science is flawed as it is unachievable to deliver flows of 80 000 ML a day over the SA border without causing destruction to all productive communities upstream.

Local communities have been long concerned about flooding impacts due to the MDBP implementation, which unfortunately has been realised due to the plan being too rigid. The problem is twofold with the creation of a detached water market that allows "investors" to sit on water and use up valuable airspace and Government departments unable to use the stored water as the "environment" is saturated. In Wet cycles which we are currently in this is destructive to farm businesses and towns who have lost stock and cash crops due to excessive inundation. Much could have been avoided if previously allocatable water was able to be used in the farming environment for food or fibre production.

Water Disassociation from the land has placed a burden on landholders who rely on the temporary allocation market to source back the water that was originally allocated. In Times of low allocation When water price is above \$150 per ML it becomes cost prohibitive to purchase therefore my land is useless in such a season. Landholders are forced to pay a delivery share based on the historical water usage on their property which has no relevance to today's usage pattern, and with lower throughput of water through the irrigation system this is reducing the region's overall productivity.

I was forced to move my business to a different region of Victoria due to the nature of dairy, we must have a reliable water supply to remain profitable. Unlike seasonal crops dairy cows can't be turned on and off year to year and the uncertainty of not being able to plan ahead has made it unviable in my situation, with no permanent allocation to level out the peaks and troughs of seasonal weather patterns.

Currently my land is running skeleton stock and is lucky to generate \$50k per annum. Previous to this disastrous policy I would have been able to generate \$500k from the same area. Generating employment for the region with a 6 times multiplier effect for dairy businesses, we can see the flow on effect through the whole community.

Further we are witnessing the destruction of the environment on and beside the river with negligent operators forcing copious volumes of water through the narrow river channel. History tells us from back in 1925 when river regulation was in its infancy, water inundation to the Gunbower Island state Forest was detrimental to the flora and the remedy was to create levees to keep the water out. Again negligence prevails and our forest is being inundated year on year damaging trees and killing off tourism by restricted access to campgrounds due to this inundation. A biosecurity hazard has also been created with an extended mosquito breeding season and the heightened risk of Ross River Fever, Murray river encephalitis and now Japanese encephalitis.

Problems with the rationalisation of the once well engineered irrigation system are emerging due to larger outlets and pumps being placed onto fewer channels and different irrigation patterns with the lower volume of water available. There are periods where irrigation customers cannot obtain water from the system when required which can negatively affect growth rates further impeding the region's productive capacity.

It has been well publicised that the GDP of the river valleys is well below that of Prior to MDBP implementation and the district looks terrible as a result. With low confidence and low reliability of the system it has become very difficult to establish and maintain farming businesses without large capital upfront. This has all but locked out the younger generation from moving into agriculture in this region.