

## **What issues are important to you**

- A plan built on evidence and real life experience by those that live in the basin
- A plan that focuses on outcomes, not volumes.
- A plan whose outcomes give equal weighting to the Environmental, Economic and Social issues

A plan which works for our businesses, our regions and our families. A plan for all Australians, not just a plan to provide South Australia with an abundant water supply for industry, unfresh water canal- based housing development and a recreational playground for their yachting regattas.

## **What lessons should be learned**

- The MDBA needs to grow some eyes and ears and learn that the on farm efficiency projects have failed. You can hear us now if you bother to.
- The MDBA needs to take into account the ripple effect beyond the farm gate affecting the wider community i.e. the service community, health, education and small business.

Programs need to be designed utilising the practical knowledge, experience and understanding of locals and NOT through a bureaucratic lens. A top down approach [which is what we have always had] makes communities resentful and angry.

- The MDBA needs to learn that the upstream irrigators generate enormous economic benefit to the nation
- The MDBA needs to understand that the gravity fed irrigation systems of NSW and Victoria provide environmental habitat while delivering water carbon free [no pumping]
- The MDBA needs to accept responsibility for the depression and suicides it has caused throughout the basin.

## **How could Basin Plan water Recovery be done better?**

- Recognise that 90% of the Basin wetlands are on private property and that's where the water has been taken from. NSW and Victoria have done all the heavy lifting and it's high time South Australia did its fair share. Recognise that too many changes have occurred e.g. [weirs, levee banks, buildings and towns, roads, schools and hospitals, to return the environment back to how it was before

European settlement. But if that's the path you choose to follow, take out the dams first,

- Recognise that no amount of water recovered from the Southern Basin is going to stop fish deaths in the Darling system.
- Recognise that prior to European settlement that all the water did not travel down the river channel. Water inundated the floodplains in NSW and Victoria creating a Garden of Eden for our first nations people, The first paddle steamers had to force their way through reed beds to traverse the Murray .These reed beds would have impeded the flow and forced the water to spread out.

The South Australian government must be part of the solution. It needs to recognise the upstream damage to communities from excessive water recovery and the damage to the river channel. The 450 gigs is a political target and is not needed. The CEWH has that much water now, it is struggling to find places to put it. Over the last 17 years, NSW General Security irrigators had only 6 years of a 100% water allocation....11 years of 50% and under....4 years of 0 to 3%. Impossible to farm without a reliable assured water allocation. In 2018-20 just 2 years after a record flood, while local irrigators were on zero, the Barmah-Millewa Forest flooded because the river was so high endeavouring to meet to meet the South Australian demands [100%]. Conveyance and transmission losses were enormous because the Darling was offline. During this period, Australia ran out of wheat, barley and rice despite pleading for a small allocation to finish crops in the ground, but they were denied. Our forefathers built the dams to drought proof the Nation.

### **How is environmental water improving the health of the Basin?**

- We would question whether there has been any improvement in Basin health despite the 13 billion already spent .Since its inception there has been a decline in forest health due to repeated man made flooding, e.g. Gunbower forest man made and natural flooding in 2022, now they are doing it again. Flooded to death. Carp numbers have skyrocketed, native fish deaths from blackwater are very common. Damage to the river channel including bank erosion, silting, trees falling in, caused by trying to fit excessive flows down the Murray River is heartbreaking to watch. Despite employing hundreds of staff, the MDBA have succeeded in destroying the once beautiful mighty Murray.
- The MDB plan is nothing to do with the environment, it's a political plan for South Australia to get water over the border where they can do anything they like with it. It yhis NOT metered or measured and this must change.

- We are sick to death of writing submissions, never getting an answer, binned or deleted. We are also tired of meetings with never any notice taken. We were present at the meeting in Deniliquin on the 7th of June and could not understand why there was no media, no recording, no photos allowed. Are we second class citizens? We attended a meeting with Tony Burke [Deniliquin] where people poured out their hearts to him. He said "I have listened and learned" and went away and did exactly what he intended in the first place. The plan must roll on.
- The management of the MDBA is atrocious. Where we sit today...the Hume, Dartmouth and Eildon dams are all one rain from spilling. The Murray river is almost full, tributaries are running and catchments are saturated. The flood risk is off the scale. Quote from a wise local, "Never before in history has so much water been sitting above us"

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