

Northern Victoria/NSW Decimated Farmers Extreme Water Concerns

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Plug the wastage of water.

Immediately fund and begin construction of Lock 0 at Wellington SA to have some control and prevent millions of dollars of precious water flowing out to sea in times of drought.

Return Lake Alexandrina back to its natural estuary state.

Consider building more locks and fish ladders along the Murray River to achieve the environmental outcomes of native fish without wasting significant water flows out to sea.

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Remove control of water flows from those who have released the entire Menindee Lakes water to flood SA, when it was already in flood and in future protect the water reserves for maintaining breeding stock and permanent plantings.

Rewrite the rule for water release to include triple bottom line outcome. Not ignoring the social well being of our communities.

At the moment, the MBD plan is supposed to deal with the environment, social and economic outcomes.

The environment is being destroyed by mismanagement, massive native fish kills, excessive erosion of rivers as they are run at flood levels for months, floodplains being flooded continually and native trees, plants and grasses killed.

The Social aspects of our rural towns are being decimated by people leaving and mental health, been huge concerns for the future of some regional areas. The Economic outcomes across the Basin have decimated these rural towns as well. Businesses (farming and retail) can't keep going without a thriving agriculture sector.

The MDB Plan has failed on all fronts.

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Remove the right of investors to carry over water. All carry over should be removed (farmers, investors and the environment); this will allow communities in each part of the MDB to at least start each year on an equal footing and not have the dams artificially high, carrying water over year to year.

If it is to stay, carry over must only be used by our irrigated agriculture sector and that water should remain on the property that it was carried over on (this would be to protect crops and breeding stock). Carry over was only introduced in the millennial drought to enable farmers to carry over their very small percentage of water right they were given for that year to try and have enough water the next year to grow a crop.

Carry over, causes inflation of water prices and allows speculator trading. All unused allocations should become part of next season's pool allocation as it used to.

*Opening up new irrigation areas, makes established areas unviable.

*Expanding the irrigation regions while water is a finite resource. Water shares are spreading thinner and thinner causing unsustainable rise in water prices.

*Watering native forests in years of critically low allocations and drought years is insane and insulting to our communities.

*Allowing non-land holding and non-agricultural investment in water shares is destroying the whole system.

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Farmers having to pay massive water bills and delivery shares and either don't get allocation of water or cannot afford to use it.

Investors are laughing; as they do not contribute to the cost of the delivery system of the MDBC yet hold all the water, with no fees. This is totally unfair! Investors are storing water as a commodity to make money and hold farmers to ransom. Water is no different to gas, oil or fuel. It is an essential commodity to help sustain one of our biggest export industries, to help keep our rural towns in the Murray Darling Basin vibrant and economically sustainable.

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Overseas countries and investors are buying huge amounts of our water. This is not Australian or morally right. It is Australia's water for Australian farmers to grow the best quality food in the world. It is our National security!

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Overseas companies are trading at a loss to avoid paying Australia tax and transferring the wealth overseas.

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The Australian government funding new irrigation developments for new land development when there is clearly insufficient water to supply them.

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NVIRP billions of our dollars now spent on irrigation on farm efficiency programs that now lay idle, as farmers can no longer afford the water to use it.

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The immediate introduction of rules which compel our politicians to declare if they or their families own water holdings Those who do, cannot vote on water regulations while holding pecuniary interest and insider knowledge.

It would be interesting to see who in our political parties (individuals and families) have benefitted from these new water policies, insider trading rules look a good fit here.

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Introduce part or all of the Bradfield scheme and drought proof inland Australia.

It is interesting to see all major parties aren't really interested in going down this path of not only securing our existing irrigated agriculture but potentially growing our food and fibre export potential, considering over population of the world and the potential food shortage.

Is it because certain people within political parties have a pecuniary interest in keeping water scarce, to keep the cost high for certain individuals and companies? Time will certainly tell all if water ownership becomes transparent.

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With expensive desalination plants lying idle around the country, they should always be running to enhance our water grid. Finally, the Federal Government is starting the SA plant to help fulfil the downstream requirements and therefore releasing some of the environmental water back to the agriculture sector. In drought, these desalination plants should be utilised wherever they can.

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The rules of water allocations to states need to be reviewed. Last year, SA had 100% of water allocation and they still managed to be able to sell excess back into the system. This year they are currently at 94%. Victoria is at around 50%. At the same time, NSW have had zero allocation for the general security (if carry over wasn't there, they would have had some allocation this year). It is not a level playing field for all and the deals that were done need to be looked at once more.

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A question that needs to be asked and the answer transparent on how the environmental buy backs are now added to their bulk entitlement from year to year. A lot of general security water was purchased from NSW. A lot of floodplain water was purchased in the north of the basin. With zero allocation of the water from these areas over the last 2 years, are these buy backs reflected in how much water is being used for the environment now? Have they received the same zero allocation for those water rights purchased?