

**IMPACTS OF THE WATER AMENDMENT (RESTORING OUR RIVERS) ACT
2023 ON NSW REGIONAL COMMUNITIES**

Name: Mr Steven Fawns

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Dear Committee Chair

I am a food producer located in the Murray valley, the effective implementation of the triple bottom line (Social, economic and environmental) was a fair equitable method of reform that would require care skill and innovation with lasting impact. The repealing of the cap on commonwealth water purchase is a blunt instrument that will meet a target with little effort but is unlikely to solve or provide a sustainable outcome.

The Snowy Hydro scheme concept was for irrigation and flood mitigation with generation a byproduct that in itself was a huge negative environmental impact. However today the dams and ability to manage water for the entire southern system and enable renewables is seen as an environmental masterpiece. My farm is also part of an adapted environmental ecosystem any changes from the impact of planned Environmental water rules and rules-based changes to allocation are a risk to both my property right, my sustainability and my ability to maintain the stewardship in the land I environmentally manage, the miss use of policy and its implementation could well transfer risk from one holder to another rather than mitigation through adaption.

This brings me to the effectiveness of previous reforms, as a land and water manager I need to innovate and do more with less it has taken decades to refine through learning and experimenting with carefully measured and metered water. I am sure environmental water managers would also be trying to do this however it takes time to optimise and respectively say to the largest irrigation manager in Australia their job of getting water where and when it needs to be takes time and like me compromise hence the damage done via river erosion to irrigate a wetland needs balancing. I need to use innovation and engineering to complement this as do Environmental water managers not just more water and without the need to meter.

Any adjustment programs need to be called out for what they are a sugar hit not a solution

The lower lakes are an example of a system that is miss represented and a focus point, barrages are no more natural than dams and serious analysis of the real Environmental cost needs to be considered not assumed

Thank you and kind regards

Steve Fawns