

## **INQUIRY INTO ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURE IN NSW**

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Obstacles to sustaining appropriate levels of agricultural production:

Water rights have to always have a link to the surface area (catchment area) owned by a landowner.

If every landowner of land over a certain acreage (perhaps of different dimensions in different rainfall areas) automatically had a certain level of tradable water rights based upon that acreage, then if they did not directly trade or lease any of those rights, or use those rights themselves, in any particular year, then presumably the government (through an appropriate department or agency) might automatically assume that it has the right to trade annual leases of such rights on their behalf and take a commission for its efforts. This would free up landowners to resume their water rights whenever they needed them (by not permitting any renewed annual lease to others of their specific acreage based water entitlements). This would be a proper and fair method of protecting landowners who only want their full water rights during certain drought conditions. They don't need them at other times.

The trading of water leases by default (where a landowner has not pursued a permit to use such rights, or to use them more fully) does create an automatic reservoir of water entitlements which can be made available to those agricultural industries which can use such water to obtain greater returns. At the same time it does not condemn the rest of the continent to perpetual policy imposed, drought!

Agricultural industries of higher water usage would no doubt be impacted in drought years by lesser availability of water, but a more environmental and democratic outcome would be that all agricultural landowners shared the pain of the drought, and not just those who never needed extra water in normal years.

I propose that rights remain with each and every landowner, but there be a default trading of water leases (not licences), which ensure that landowners are not perpetually deprived of the water which falls upon their land and which are not needed for environmental flows.

I hope my ideas are given serious thought, as the current regime is a total and utter mockery of common sense.

It makes no sense whatsoever that people can pump water out of small creeks to their hearts content just because they have a water licence which they acquired for a song prior to the commercialisation of the whole corrupt scheme. Not only are water flows reduced to those downstream, but water flows from upstream are hastened. It affects everyone, and the current scheme reeks of unjust enrichment of the fortunate few who never will have to try and buy their licences at a commercial rate