

**Submission
No 18**

INQUIRY INTO WATER AUGMENTATION

Name: Mr Wayne Chaffey

Date received: 18 June 2016

**NSW UPPER HOUSE COMMITTEES
INQUIRY INTO THE FUTURE OF WATER IN RURAL AND REGIONAL NSW**

18/06/2016

Wayne Chaffey

**RE: WATER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
COCKBURN RIVER (UNREGULATED) – TAMWORTH NSW
(NSW Office of Water – now DPI Water)**

1. The Water Sharing Plan and associated licence changes by the NSW Office of Water, has been a complete failure in regards to social, economic and land use for the Cockburn Valley.
2. As a result, surface water (irrigation from river) has been cut by 66%, from 1,600 megalitres per year, to less than 500 megalitres per year.
3. The Cockburn Valley has experienced a catastrophic loss in hay production, totalling over \$1 million.
4. The land use of farms that pump from the river only, have changed from irrigated alluvial floodplain, to dryland grass (hobby farm), with nil production output.
5. I rely on my farm for my sole source of income, which has dropped dramatically as a result of not being allowed to irrigate my Lucerne and other crops during critical times of moisture deficiency.
6. In the last four years, the days I've had no access to pump has totalled:

Period	Days
2012 – 2013	140 days
2013 – 2014	265 days
2014 – 2015	150 days
2015 – 2016	182 days

7. As a result of the huge losses in hay production, I have lost existing customers as I've just simply had no hay to supply to them. In 2013 – 2014, I was only able to get 2 cuts of hay instead of the usual 7. These great losses have continued each and every year since.
8. In 2013 – 2014, a local transport company trucked hay all the way from South Australia to supply to customers in the Tamworth/New England area.
9. The NSW Office of Water, stated in the Cockburn Valley Water Sharing Plan socioeconomic report, that the changes to my water licence conditions would make me more profitable - which is completely unbelievable. All it has done is made the South Australian farmer more profitable.
10. The Cockburn River has an average annual flow of 103,000 megalitres per year.

The licensed river pumping capacity is:	4,459 megalitres
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Average usage prior to 2007:	1,600 megalitres	36% of licensed capacity
Average usage for the past 9 years:	Less than 500 megalitres	12% of licensed capacity

11. In 2007, the NSW Office of Water changed my licence conditions and as a direct result I suffered a 40% cut in my water access. Over the past 9 years it has only gotten worse, having only 3 years of full access due to there being floods in those years.
12. Under the water access rules prior to 2007, the Cockburn Valley was a highly productive irrigated area, supporting numerous farmers and the wider Tamworth community.
13. The NSW Government, under the direction of DPI Water need to make immediate changes – Not in 4 years' time when it is too late. How do you reactivate an irrigation farm that has been turned into a hobby farm?

Kind Regards,

Wayne Chaffey
Cockburn Valley Irrigator