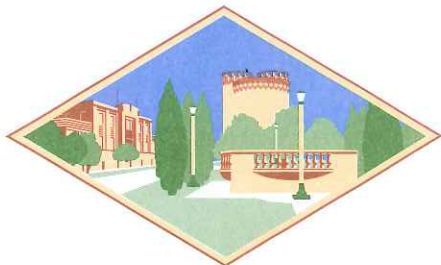


## INQUIRY INTO WATER AUGMENTATION

**Organisation:** Leeton Shire Council

**Date received:** 16 August 2016

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# LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

*Preserving the Past, Enhancing the Future*

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EF10:112 NJ

Monday 15 August, 2016

The Hon Robert Brown MLC

Chair

Inquiry into the augmentation of water supply for rural and regional NSW

Legislative Assembly

SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Hon Robert Brown MLC

SUBJECT: Legislative Council Inquiry into the augmentation of water supply for rural and regional NSW

Leeton Shire Council would like to thank the General Purpose Standing Committee for allowing us the opportunity to submit feedback into the Inquiry into the augmentation of water supply for rural and regional NSW.

Something which has perplexed regional communities for many years is for the State and Federal government to recognise Agriculture and value-added industries as a valuable and consistent contributor to Gross Domestic Product, the value of export dollars and jobs growth. Regional communities contribute to the success of agriculture, yet this is yet to be translated into a long serving water plan linking the Federal Government's Australian Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper.

Leeton Shire Council is very proud of its industries who contribute enormously to our regional economy, exports and jobs and are heavily reliant on irrigable water. Our Gross Regional Product has increased by 11% in the last two years alone to \$527 million and with further growth anticipated in containerised and bulk freight volumes all driven by irrigation.

To prepare for the future growth of our industries, Council is partnering with key stakeholders to invest in enabling infrastructure and through this Inquiry, we believe that the Federal Government is a major partner to enable infrastructure projects relating to water to continue to remain a high priority for regional communities.

The Inquiry into the augmentation of water supply for rural and regional is very broad and Council would like to make comment in relation to the following terms of reference:

**1a Investigate the requirement for a water equation (demand and supply out to the middle of this century) for rural and regional NSW.**

Leeton Shire Council would support a long term plan on water sustainability and ensuring that rural and regional NSW has access to good quality drinking water and to be able to continue to access clean water for the productive use of agriculture and value added industries. Council

would like to see the politics taken out of the consultation and the plan and for the plan to be driven by key stakeholders.

The plan must meet key objectives in terms of improving water management practices across all state / federal and private water organisations in line with the Water Sharing Plan for the Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source 2003, the MDBA Plan as well as private irrigation companies who are tasked with delivering water. There must be greater transparency and scientific rigour placed on any new water plans which must also link closely with the Australian Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper.

Leeton Shire Council would like to congratulate Minister for Lands and Water Niall Blair for ordering a review of the provisions for translucent flow releases from inland regulated river storages, which are considered outdated in lieu of the changes to water management and water entitlement portfolios.

**b.) Examine the suitability of existing NSW water storages and any future schemes for augmentation of water supply in NSW, including the potential for aquifer recharge.**

Leeton Shire Council would support an investigation as to whether existing water storages will have the capacity and capability to continue to meet the needs of downstream users into the future and whether modifications to existing storage facilities could improve the supply and delivery of water.

Leeton Shire was built on water and the irrigation scheme and Council maintains a close working relationship with stakeholders such as Murrumbidgee Irrigation Pty Ltd, the Office of Environment and Heritage, State Water, the MDBA and NSW DPI Water and Lands. Council has enormous confidence in Murrumbidgee Irrigation's commitment to deliver on their Corporate vision "2016-2021 Growing our Future together – Customers, Company, Community" to continue to successfully deliver water in the most efficient and cost effective method to its customers.

Leeton Shire Council strongly supports all mechanisms which focus on efficiency and triple bottom line outcomes and would welcome flexibility in existing plans and new opportunities for this to be enabled.

Leeton Shire Council is an active participant in the MDA Region 9 group and is willing to be part of this conversation and would like to invite the senate committee to Leeton to see first-hand the industries which rely on irrigation and the importance of irrigation to this region.

Leeton Shire Council wishes to thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Paul Maytom  
Mayor – Leeton Shire Council