

**Supplementary
Submission
No 71a**

INQUIRY INTO WATER AUGMENTATION

Organisation: West Berriquin Irrigators Inc

Date Received: 1 March 2017

Additional Information regarding inquiry into the

Augmentation Water NSW

Of the 2750 GL to be recovered through the basin plan 1178GL or 43% is to come from NSW. 83% is to come from the Southern Basin. To date NSW Murray has contributed 341 GL representing roughly 17%. Of that 64% was straight buybacks, not efficiency.

Since 1995 NSW Murray alone has lost 1164 GL of productive water entitlements to environmental flows through different recovery projects. This has put a strain on the productivity of our region.

The MDBA massively **under-estimated social and economic impacts** stating the loss of \$800 million in production and 800 jobs¹. Industry analysis shows a minimum loss of up to \$2 billion in gross regional production and between 5-8,000 jobs². This significant misestimating has been highlighted through the Northern Basin Reviews and the GMID report into the impact of the Basin Plan.

Murray Irrigation, the largest privately owned irrigation company in Australia, has seen 28% of its water resource returned to environmental flows, roughly 70% been through buybacks. This is putting a huge strain on the company and those left in the system. We have certainly reached a tipping point where the removal of any more productive water has the potential to render the system unviable and for those left the delivery of water will become unaffordable.

According to ABS statistics each ML of water produces \$1900 worth of goods, equating to \$1.9 billion in lost production to the state of NSW (on a full allocation year). To NSW Murray the 341 GL recovered would equate to \$650 million in lost production.

Removal of resources in this magnitude will have an impact on entire communities. To compensate our region received a grant of \$150 000 in the first round of Diversification funding and last year received another \$3 million. And I cannot emphasise enough that flow on effect to businesses reliant on the agricultural sector is largely not recognised.

If the water that has already been recovered from NSW (1047.7 GL) was used to grow food it could produce:

- Rice – 1047GL could produce roughly 900 000 ton which is equal to 5.8 billion servings of rice
- Milk – 1047 GL could produce roughly 1.2 billion L of milk or 5 billion lattes
- Wheat – 1047 GL could produce 1.5 million T of wheat or 2.5 billion loaves of bread.

Solutions

- No more water recovery from productive use
- NSW need to push for complementary measures within the SDL projects – that is non flow projects eg Fish restocking
- No to the 450GL
- End of system to play their part
- Need support, especially political for communities to readjust
- Decentralisation of government agencies. We need NSW DPI and NSW Water and MDBA out in the regional centres engaged and working with locals who have vast amounts of knowledge and experience.

Shelley Scoullar

West Berriquin Irrigators

¹ *Guide to the Proposed Murray Darling Basin Plan, Vol 1*, MDBA, 8 October 2010, Executive Summary, p. XXVII.

² NSW Irrigators' Council impact calculator, 2012, based on available data – including ABS and ABARES