

**Submission  
No 107**

## **INQUIRY INTO WATER AUGMENTATION**

**Name:** Mr Rhys Glenn

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## Submission: Augmentation of Water Supply for Rural and Regional NSW

I am a Southern Riverina Irrigator pumping water from a private irrigation scheme. Irrigation water is used for cereal crop production, pasture, livestock and stock & domestic use. Our scheme has a long history of irrigation water use established in 1958. Our scheme was the first private joint irrigation scheme in NSW fully funded without taxpayer monies, encouraged by government to drought proof our farms. Changes to water availability and management have had a massive impact economically and socially on our business and livelihood.

As a winter cereal crop grower our water needs are different to summer irrigators. Our grain growing season is May to November. The peak demand for water for winter cereal crops is August to October. As the Irrigation season opens in July usually with zero allocation or an ultra-conservative negligible amount the only way to manage our crop production is to carry over water. We have to have carry over because it is vital to our business decision making. Production budgets are set at crop sowing in May and water is either purchased to carry over or kept to carry over so that it can be used Aug-Oct when it is essential for crop production.

Maybe it would make more sense if the beginning of the water season was after the winter rains and allocation announcements were based on actual water levels in the dams and not on a best guess simulated computer model. We understand if there is no water in dams there is no water to deliver irrigators.

Under the present "water rules" irrigators have lost water security with the bias towards environmental water.

Irrigators are not getting the water they are entitled to. The maintenance and management of dams and the river system are paid by levies charged to irrigators. These levies are not borne by all water users. We have had to have electronic meters installed that measure down to 0.001ML. Environmental water is not measured at all. Best guess seems to be their measurement.

Water security continues to decline. Irrigators shouldn't be put in a position where we have to argue and fight continually against bureaucracy. It is time agriculture was taken seriously and valued by government, academics and environmentalists. Irrigators are part of the environment and are concerned with water and landcare management for their farms. Irrigators have been discriminated against victimised, blamed, bullied and being treated as anti-environment. We had water stolen from us during the drought by NSW state water, this was purchased carried over water essential for our business. Mismanagement and poor water accountability by government meant it happened twice. Inadequate, haphazard compensation followed delivered on the basis of who wrote the best letter!!

Irrigators are not asking for more water, essentially we want more security to deliver the water we pay for. One way to give more security is to limit carry over by environment and non-agricultural water licence holders.

Lack of security has left irrigators in the Southern Riverina who have access to water no option other than to use the carry over system.

Rhys Glenn