

**Submission  
No 108**

## **INQUIRY INTO WATER AUGMENTATION**

**Name:** Mr Ray Johnston

**Date received:** 5 April 2017

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## **SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY INTO WATER SUPPLY IN COUNTRY AREAS**

Dear Sirs,

I would like to offer an old solution to a problem that has become so complex and difficult that any suggested solution based on our knowledge of the current conditions will never solve everyone's needs. The current suggestions of a few dams in strategic places is nothing more than a band-aid solution which would still depend on our unreliable rainfall which has proven to be inadequate for the needs of ALL of the towns and people that depend on the river for their survival.

The suggestion I have would not only solve everyone's needs but would also open up endless opportunities for growth, employment and be of huge benefit to the country as a whole in many ways.

I am referring to the solution of diverting water either using a pipeline or digging a channel from the Clarence River down to the Darling River. I understand that in the 1950s the Government of the time had a study done to determine if this was possible and the results were to the affirmative.

I also understand that this would be a huge project, be expensive and take a long time. The Chinese would have done it back when it was first suggested without hesitation if it was identified that we needed to solve a water problem and provide unlimited opportunities for the future. Why have we waited so long? It is the obvious solution and opposes the letting of all that water running out to sea with no benefit.

With your indulgence I would like to list a few of the advantages of such a project.

Advantages:

1. The construction of this project could employ huge numbers of currently unemployed people and possibly be an answer to those about to be unemployed from the car industry.
2. The construction may also be accomplished by a work for the dole project.
3. There would be enough water for all users.
4. It would open up current unoccupied areas for more farming and create more industry.
5. Once completed it would provide many new permanent jobs.
6. Both the State and Federal Governments economies would benefit greatly

Comment:

May I start by saying that Broken Hill and the lower Darling water users have never had a problem with running out of water since the lakes were first

commissioned until the cotton growers started taking it and polluting it. Why have they not been prosecuted for their pollution of the Darling River?

I along with most people are sick of hearing about the constantly overstated amount of evaporation from the Menindee Lakes system. Firstly there is actually no accurate method of measuring the amount of evaporation the official amounts are only an educated guess and those who have opportunity to benefit are constantly overstating the rate and using it as an excuse to either take it before it gets here or to let it go.

I am certainly not saying there isn't a high rate of evaporation but if you listen to the cotton growers and politicians one would think that the Menindee Lakes is the only place in Australia that evaporation occurs. It is commonsense to thinking people that the northern storage dams that exist for the cotton growers are closer to the equator and are subject to higher average temperatures throughout the year therefore a higher rate of evaporation must exist. Broken Hill and Menindee certainly have hot summers but we also have cold winters when no evaporation occurs. At the southern end it is widely recognized that Lake Alexandrina has a much higher rate of evaporation due to its size and shallow depth compared with the Menindee Lakes system.

I am aware of the Tri State agreement which has been in place since the planning stage of the lakes and that SA had first options but in the past they never took the water unless they actually needed it. Why has the water been let go twice now at a time when the Murray river was in flood or very close to it as was the case in the first instance? I am aware that the environment at the southern end has won a water allocation which wasn't there before, they don't seem to have considered what is happening to the environment all along the river and around the lakes when they stop the river running from the north and then let all the water go south. Tons of fish are killed from dried up lakes and many other species die and are lost. There is no balance there.

Why hasn't the local Aboriginal cultural requirements been considered and applied as is the case elsewhere.

My apologies for going over issues that you have already heard, but the problem is a very complex issue with a very simple solution. Why is it no one seems to want to commit to such a big infrastructure project. Yes it would cost a lot, yes it would take a long time, but the benefits would be everlasting and secure a future for our people and be a huge step forward in Australia's development of our inland.

Yours Sincerely,

Ray Johnston