

INQUIRY INTO FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING

Organisation: Name suppressed

Date Received: 12 August 2021

Partially
Confidential

As an irrigator who doesn't floodplain harvest, I am appalled at the injustice that my supplementary licence has been reduced to offset unregulated floodplain harvesting. This injustice was enabled by the disallowance of regulations to licence, manage and meter floodplain harvesting in May 2021.

I have followed the rules as have other irrigators, and now the politicians are throwing us under the bus.

I am not a lawyer, but if floodplain harvesting was illegal, why then has the Minister reduced my supplementary water? Clearly, there is evidence to support it as a historical form of take and I do not have an issue with it. It is an important source of water in our region during times of plenty, when it floods.

It's just that I've had my water reduced because others access water from the floodplain.

My business should not have to operate with less water, while others remain unrestricted and without rules because some in the NSW Parliament have a conspiracy about the national party and don't want to be seen to be helping irrigators. These new rules and restrictions have been removed in a time when our rivers are full and flowing and we are at more chance of a flood, than a drought.

My business cannot wait years for you to sort out the rules for floodplain harvesting or come up with flow targets when it's not flooding.

I have had to reduce my summer planting because of this debacle, at a time when I should be able to get back to my maximum production after three years of the worst drought. It will impact my businesses recovery from the drought and likely make me less prepared for the next one if this continues.

Also, the rainfall runoff regulation meant that I could continue to operate my farm as designed in best practice, to meet environmental obligations to keep rainfall runoff from cultivated fields on the farm without the need to be a floodplain harvester.

I do not consider myself a floodplain harvester, but I am an irrigator who has expertly designed, and precision developed my irrigated land to capture my excess irrigation water and rainfall runoff within my farm, and thus avoid releasing potentially contaminated water back into our rivers. The regulation clearly enabled me to continue that historical practice as an exemption without the need for excessive regulation or cost.

I support that all water take for irrigation should be licenced, metered, and reported to government and our community. This obviously must include floodplain harvesting.

It's a logical and simple solution, licence, reduce and meter those who are creating the problem and leave the rest of us alone. We have meters and rules, just give them to everyone. Urgently, now, not in two years, or another 20-years.