

## INQUIRY INTO FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 13 July 2021

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Partially  
Confidential

To whom it may concern,

As a taxpaying NSW citizen, it is my opinion, supported by scrupulous citizen accounts and studies, that floodplain harvesting should remain illegal in NSW. More efforts should be made by the NSW Government to pass the Member for Murray, Helen Dalton's Water Registry Bill to create greater public awareness and accountability for who owns our water in NSW.

There is no good reason why most of the Liberal and National Party members should vote against such a bill. The decoupling of land from water ownership has meant multinational corporations and interests are able to own our water, tax free which is at the absolute behest of all towns such as Wilcannia, Bourke and Minindee, as well as towns further south in the Murray Darling (MD) system.

There isn't even a proven economic benefit for Australia's national interest for draining the southern basin towns of their water supply. The northern MD basin's largest export (benefiting from floodplain harvesting) is cotton, which accounts for 80% of the economy and has a GDP of \$3 billion. On the other hand, the southern basin has a GDP of \$16 billion; it is over five times more valuable. This value is only going to reduce over time as water from floodplain harvesting in the northern basin of the MD is caught for the benefit of tax-exempt multinationals and National Party donors. The only reason this makes any sense at all is to line the pockets of National Party donors, who in turn, keep them elected in exchange for exclusive access to water (or less politely - theft).

Additionally, public health funding needs to be allocated to study the link between Blue-Green Algae blooms and motor-neurone disease. In Southern Basin Murray Darling river system towns such as Griffith, there has been a notable increase in cases as the town has become more reliant on their dams which contain Blue-Green Algae. These dams have blooms due to the lack of fresh, clean water coming down the MD system from the north.

According to the UN, access to water is a fundamental human right. When towns like Wilcannia with a life expectancy of 38-40 have to rely on private donor delivered bottled water for up to 6 months at a time due to floodplain harvesting and catchments from foreign owners upstream in the northern Murray Darling basin, there is a serious breach of human rights occurring. Water should not be treated as a stock, it is essential for human life and prosperity. Australian's deserve more from their government, especially members of The National party who claim to be "for regional Australia".