

**Submission
No 154**

INQUIRY INTO FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING

Name: Mr Thomas Smith

Date Received: 14 July 2021

To Whom it may concern,

After following up with articles produced about the Murray Darling basin I've discovered that views are polarised and politicised heavily. A system of water that covers so much of our land in the south east and that is clearly in such distress warrants swift and considered action. It is my understanding that a select few have been given access to more than their share, making massive profits (such as the cotton farms in the northern part of the basin) with catastrophic trickle down effects to other farmers and communities.

I've become aware that not only the landscape is suffering but the people who live on and around the river system are progressively becoming poorer, less healthy and more depressed as well as seeing their community services and funding shrink as people move away from these rural hubs as a result of the decline of ecosystem and community.

The ecological effects are apparent and can be attributed to the neglect or negligence of the politicians (seemingly from the The National party) that are voted in to speak up for the small towns that make Australia what it is. I haven't lived in the city all my life, spending the first 18 in rural NSW and even in my life time I've been privy to changes that are most disturbing. Hearing my relatives (from in and around Griffith) speak about the changes they're experiencing is heartbreaking; less fish, less birdlife, less diversity on the whole. I understand that this river system has been flowing for tens of thousands of years at least and in a mere 3 to 4 decades we have seemed to fuck the whole thing up.

It's a contentious statement to make but, I believe that individuals like Helen Dalton who are calling for the transparency of water use from ALL who access this massive water system is the only way to start managing this situation correctly. I am not aware of any particular organisation or information system that is keeping comprehensive enough information (including water use for 'mum and dad farms' right up to massive Chinese-owned properties) that can paint the full picture of how the Murray Darling is declining.

As a result I would strongly encourage the initiation of a Water Register as outlined by Helen Dalton. Hopefully this will reveal with great accuracy who has been cheating the system and make the system clearer to follow and easier to enforce.

I write to you with great concern for the immediate integrity of what is now a fragile ecosystem on which we all rely.

Thomas Smith