

**Submission
No 247**

INQUIRY INTO FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING

Name: Mr Benjamin Coulton

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**Floodplain Harvesting
Parliament of New South Wales**

To Whom It May Concern

As an irrigator who doesn't floodplain harvest, I find the current situation inequitable. I have followed the rules but there is a group of irrigators out there who, through no fault of their own, don't have rules to follow. That is a failure of government.

I am not a lawyer, but if floodplain harvesting was illegal as some people claim, why isn't NRAR prosecuting irrigators? Why then has the Minister reducing supplementary water? Why is it represented in the Murray Darling Ministerial Cap on diversion?

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 for some, available during times of plenty, when it floods.

I do not access water from the floodplain, but I am an irrigator. But because of the way the Water Management Act is written, to continue to operate my farm as I have historically, I can be called a floodplain harvester when I capture rainfall runoff.

To be clear – I am required by a condition on my work approval for the land to not allow water from within my development to leave my farm. (or) As part as a condition of my membership 10 to my irrigation district, I am required to not discharge excess water into their delivery system. I must keep this water on farm to the best of my ability.

The rainfall runoff regulation meant that I could continue to operate my farm as designed for best practice, to meet these largely environmental obligations without the need to be a floodplain harvester.

I do not consider myself a floodplain harvester, but I am an irrigator with expertly designed and precision developed irrigated land, which, captures my excess irrigation water and rainfall runoff within my farm to avoid releasing potentially contaminated water back into our rivers.

The rainfall runoff regulation clearly enabled me to continue that historical practice without the need for excessive regulation or cost. The rainfall runoff regulation would have provided me the ongoing certainty around how to operate my farm without impacting legal limits, as it's a small volume of water.

I support that all major water take for irrigation should be licensed, metered, and reported to Government and our community. This obviously must include floodplain harvesting where it occurs.

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

Regards,

Benjamin Coulton

Director

Coulton Farming Co