

**SUBMISSION FOR VICTORIAN WATER SHARE REVIEW**

My Name is Jodie Hay . I am a fifth Generation Irrigation Dairy Farmer from Cohuna .As the 2018 Gannawarra Citizen of the year I write this submission with a heavy heart as I watch my once vibrant community crumble into disrepair as our Government watches on like it is a spectator sport void of any responsibility . During the past 2 months 23 Farms have ceased milking cows in our district alone . As quoted in Murray Dairy's Future Focus Stategic Plan Document, an average 200 cow dairy generates \$1,000,000.00 at farm gate, with \$ 780,000.00 of this going straight into the local economy . That is a total of 17,940,000 Million dollars gone from our region in 8 weeks .So it does not take a rocket scientist to work out the drastic negative impact this will have on our community . This fall out is far from over as established generational farmers are all looking at their options and selling their cows is high on the list . We are watching a terrorist like attack from our own Government across the Murray Darling Region . There is no consideration or care given to the distruction of our superior genetic herds , farming systems or for our country's food security . I have attended hundreds of meeting and written many letters all to no avail as the train wreck continues and the rural communities of The Murray Darling Basin are the collateral damage !!! Despite by pessimistic attitude to anyone taking any notice of these community submissions I am once again volunteering my time to continue to fight for our region's residents, industries and it's Environment .

1. The time frame for the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan must be increased . A need to Pause the Plan is essential to revise and reset the MDBP. The implementation of the plan has been way too short . There has not been adequate time for

\*Farmers to adapt to such a huge change in water availability. To expect one generation to absorb these massive changes in Water Policy in seven short years could only result in the catastrophic events we are experiencing here in Northern Victorian Dairy Industry . The Enormous capital investment , new skill set and knowledge required to change traditional Pasture based systems has been grously underestimated . There has also been no consideration of other factors influencing the dominant industries during this period of rapid change such as Industry downturns, floods and drought . The lack of flexibility and ability for Landowners to adapt highlights the lack of consideration given to these participants in the MDBP.

\*This time frame has also proved too short for adequate consultation and planning with local community members re many Irrigation Modernisation Projects . The past 7 years we have seen a multitude of disastrous projects that have caused individual farmers enormous emotional, physical and financial grief . This "Policy made on the run model" that has been implemented has been an expensive experiment with questionable water savings as well as

creating some Environmental nightmares .EG Lined channels proving to be Death traps for Native fauna as well as the destruction of 100 year old Eco systems that supported many aquatic species such as mussels, yabbies and fish ! Gravity Systems replaced with pumps with no alternative energy options eg Solar panels seems environmentally unsound .

\*More time is also needed to adequately establish how much and when Environmental Waterings should occur in the selected sights . The current program eg {Gunbower Forest Waterings }is having varied results at best ! The just add water approach seems to be having mixed results across vegetation and native species numbers according to North Central CMA's evaluation of the Environmental Waterings of the Gunbower Forest . The Damage to the Murray River Banks due to too much water being pushed through the system must be addressed . The flooding of private land is also causing Established Box trees to fall over and Die in areas near Leitchville due to too much water being forced through the Hipwell Weir outlet for Environmental Watering of the Gunbower Forest .

There must also be more accountability to all outcomes of Environmental Waterings both positive and negative . Control of weeds, feral animals {Foxes and Carp } as well as over population of native animals such as Kangaroos is essential as they are now Farmers of the Forest and must deal with the full responsibility of this role .

\*Time is needed to obtain a comprehensive review of the Environmental Benefit of Irrigated Agriculture as it absent from the current MDBP . Irrigated Farms are all Micro Wetlands and collectively form the biggest wetland in Victoria . How is it that there has been no acknowledgement or recognition of this in the MDBP. How can the Environmental outcomes of the plan be accurate when they missing such a huge part of the Environment .For example In the North Central Catchment Management Authority region 86 % of this area is farm land yet the MDBP results concentrate only on the remaining 14% to gain its Environmental Outcomes . It is essential that Landowners and Authorities establish collaborative projects to obtain true Environmental outcomes . Our land forms important sanctuaries and feeding grounds for vast numbers of Native species . There has been no studies done to determine the impact on this as Irrigation is removed from this region .

2. There must be some acknowledgment of the distortion to the water market caused by the sudden influx Commonwealth Money .
3. A review of carryover water is necessary . Changes would need to be phased in over a period of three years .Suggested Changes would include only those who own a delivery point and who own delivery share can carry over water . A percentage of water used in previous season can be carried over . By implementing these changes it allows "End User irrigators who contribute to the Maintenance of the Irrigation System to use Carry over as a management tool . It removes the ability for Investors to hold irrigators to ransom from season to season . It will allow more water to go back into the consumptive pool to improve the following season allocation. It also reduces the large volumes of Commonwealth Water holders Water filling the storages and increasing the chance of spills. By adding the requirement of having to own delivery shares and a delivery point to carry over water will encourage investment back into the historic irrigation regions whilst also providing a much needed revenue boost for water authorities such as Goulburn Murray Water .
4. Water that spills from the Dam must be accounted for as Environmental Water

5. All water Brokers must have a transparent Platform {EG Waterpool }to ensure market manipulation is not occurring .
6. Impacts of delivering the Environmental Water must be reported and transparent , Barmah Choke flooding, flooding of private land , damage to creek and river banks due to constant high water levels . An agency need to be established for local community members to alert authorities of Impacts to local areas .
7. The Murray Darling Basin Committee must be an community elected group of individuals instead of being Hand picked and briefed by the MDBA.
8. Trigger points established to release Excess Commonwealth water back to the consumptive pool via the market . Money raised from this could go towards Environmental projects such as installing fish ladders etc . So the Environmental benefits are still achieved but the negative impacts on irrigation communities is relieved .
9. A majority of the Environmental Waterings that are occurring in The Gunbower State forest occur in Winter and spring , hense our natural drainage system the Gunbower Creek and the Murray River is full to the brim at the time when we are most likely to have rain events . This puts our region at a greater risk of major flooding .
10. A very close eye needs to kept on our regions very salty water table . These large volumes of water sitting for months on end in the Gunbower and Barmah Forests year after year could result a rise in the water table . This would be catastrophic for the forests vegetation as the water table here is saltier than the sea .

There must be a review of The Murray Darling Basin Plan as it stands at the moment it is a

“Politically Influenced Plan ,based on questionable science that has seen billions of Tax payer money spent to fundamentally turn Salt water into fresh whilst sending Fresh water out to sea all the while destroying industries and communities throughout the Murray Darling Basin Plan and with minimal Environmental benefifits !”

It is the real life version of “The Hunger Games “!!!

Jodie Hay