

Submission to Productivity Commission on 5 Year review of Murray Darling Basin Authority.

Smartdrivers would like the Productivity Commission to receive a submission on the 5 year review of the Murray Darling Basin Authority.

It is our opinion that the Lower Balonne EG. from Bifurcation No 1 to the New South Wales border has taken at least 80% of the water buy back with the balance coming from around StGeorge. This water buy back is always referred to as the Condamine Balonne. In our opinion there has not been any water bought back from north of the Beardmore Dam precincts.

This domination of water buy back from such a small area on the length of the Condamine Balonne has had a devastating effect on the township of Hebel and big effect on the township of Dirranbandi, the only two towns situated in the Lower Balonne. We think that our communities have paid more than their fair share of dues to the Murray Darling water buy back and the Australian community. If any further water buy back is needed in the Condamine Balonne could you please go to other communities along the river system.

We are fearful that all the negative publicity that we are receiving will have a detrimental effect on our property values and also the value of business in both Dirranbandi and Hebel.

Healthy Headwaters has been a great initiative as it is a win to local contractors who can continue to employ whilst the river, with the water “bought back” going on down to help the environmental assets. We would like to see the Government extend the time for this very important method of water buy back.

We are concerned with the shepherding of water bought by the Government, across the New South Wales border. This is a New South Wales Government problem which they are taking a long time to do something about.

There is a real need for CEWH to get more proactive and consider more options rather than water buy back. There is the option to store water they have already bought in some of the decommissioned storages. This water then can be released at a later date to help finish a bird breeding event. They also

have to get more involved with temporary transfer of water and this has to happen overnight and not in two weeks' time by which the water has passed.

CEWH have to better informed about the Lower Balonne as at this stage they seem only concerned about the two rivers which have the environmental assets. There are another three rivers in the Lower Balonne which water livestock and most importantly humans in the townships of Hebel and Goodooga. Smartrivers along with the help of Water Resources in St George have worked very hard at times to try and get water to these two small towns with no recognition from CEHW as they seem more intent on the environment rather than the social and economic aspect of our rivers.

There is a strong need to have the automated gates put in at Bifurcation No 1 so as to augment the flows down the smaller intersecting streams. These works have been spoken about for at least ten years and money has been allocated, however no one seems inspired enough to carry out the works.

Yours Faithfully

Don Crothers (Acting Secretary Smartrivers)

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