

What has come out in the report from the Australia institute about the dealings between Webster's and the Government?

Again this is yet another example where the government is focused on helping out big business. Not only focused on helping but have obviously made a deal on the water purchase, then trying to justify that amount of money. This time to Webster's, yet there are many farmers that have been gutted in value and productivity directly due to the management of the MDBA in the lower darling, as well as the government turning a blind eye to the massive amounts of water taken from the rivers Illegally.

Where is the compensation to all of the properties that will be directly effected by the proposed change in the Menindee lakes management? Where is the compensation to the loss of jobs so that the Menindee township has a cost neutral effect from the MDBP which is what is required? Now that there have been a number of irrigators that have left Menindee due to the poor water quality and reliability, including Tandou has cost the region reportedly close to 700 jobs. This is bad enough but when you look at the percentage of job lost it is staggering. So while in the northern basin it appears that anything possible is being done to continue irrigation, using the excuse of loose a few jobs yet further in the system the MDBA have allowed the proposal for the destruction of the most important fish nursery in the MDB system and also devastate the area economically and yet no one seems to care. Then this very project that is supposedly going to recover/save over 100GL of water a year has been called into question in a report saying that there is little justification or evidence that

Jacobs Engineering have stated that the Menindee lakes reconfiguration report did not represent an organized or comprehensive case. There was limited evidence to provide that the benefits are real

Yet the MDBA, state and federal government have claimed that "Independently modeling of the project will make water savings.

How can water removed from the environment possibly be used to justify more water being extracted for irrigation?

All of this highlights the need for a royal commission into the nsw and the federal government and MDBA in relation to the MDBP and its management and implementation.

There are constraints within the MDBP on the water volumes that can be released, where by if the MDBA inundate flood plains, there is a fear (or realized) compensation claims that will be pursued. This is because of the loss of usable land (famed flood plains) during this time, leading to a loss of production/income and perhaps also damages caused to infrastructure that requires replacement. Where are the same considerations where by, at the hand of the MDBA, their management actions are causing loss to usable land due to there being no water. The viability to graze livestock diminishes as there is no water to sustain them. The box trees on the flood plains are dying because they have not received a drink from the river in a number of years because the effort if made to make sure that the water does not leave the river channel so as to not "waste water" The river bends and gum

trees are no longer thriving. The lignum that was once prolific the river flats when I was younger are now gone altogether. Where it was so thick that you could not ride a horse or motorbike through it, there is nothing left but an open plain of river country because over the last 10-20 years flooding has been so rare that it has died.

Where once we used to prepare for floods by pushing up levee banks to protect access roads and keep property on high ground, now we are forced to purchase tanks and pumps to prepare for no flow events in the river, and carting in water for basic amenities such as showering and flushing toilets.

From a Station that had race horses, irrigated Lucerne and orange orchard in the late 1800s, prior to the construction of the Menindee lake system, with 3 recorded events where water supply was an issue in this time until the Menindee lakes were modified to provide secure water supply to Broken Hill, South Australia and the lower Darling. Since then, 1960 (1947 actually) till 2007 there was just a single cease to flow event in the lower Darling, being in 2002. Now under the system managed as part of the MDB agreements it is about to become 3 significant cease to flow events in the last 12 years by December 2018.

So on record, we have had 4 cease to flow events of significance between 1870 and 2006 (one in 2002), 136 years in the lower Darling prior to the MDB agreement that has now created what will be 3 significant cease to flow events in 12 years. What makes it even worse is 2012 and 2016 the lakes were all but full, yet in 2010, 2015 and 2018 there will have been a cease to flow event in the lower Darling, not due to drought, but simply due to the (mis) management under the plan. Since the implementation of the 2012 water sharing (extraction) plans there will have been 2 very significant cease to flow event in the last 5 years.

The MDBP of the northern basin is built in a very bad model, where by the average annual flows have been worked out on long term averages. This is a very bad policy given the highly variable flows in the Barwon/Darling river system. The long term average used in the MDBP to work out the SDL appears to be around the 9500GL per year. This sounds ok as a figure to use until you understand what the figures really look like.

In 80 years in 100, the annual flows are below 6500GL per year. In 60 years out of 100, the annual flows are less than 2500GL per year.

When this is added to a 2012 water sharing plan that can take up to 300% allocations from the river you end up with a big problem, mostly the fact that there is not enough water to keep the river flowing or provide any sort of water security down stream of the large entitlement holders north of Burke. So despite the MDBP using an the long term average of 9500GL, the reality is the long term average is skewed, because in just 3 years, more than 10% of all flows being recorded, has flowed down the river system. In fact, in just one year more than 57,000GL flowed down the river system.

So again, the SDL is based on a flow rate that is almost 4 times the flows that have been seen in the river 60 years out of the last 100 years.

How in hell is this ever going to be sustainable?

You are here to do a 5 year assessment of the MDBP, these are the realities for us. Since the implementation of the plan, we have had the lakes all but full twice, we will have had the river run totally dry twice, (the last cease to flow was for almost 12 months) and all this from the \$8 Billion dollars that has been spent so far towards the Plans outcomes.

We have a property that could be worth upward of \$1M with water security as it was prior to the MDBP, and now is unsaleable.

We have a property that has survived and prospered since 1849, that has endured wars, floods, droughts, union blockades and now has been destroyed by the MDBP along with all the surrounding communities.

If Webster's has been paid compensation for loss of property value due to having no access to water, surely this has set the precedence for the remaining property owners in the district, and not just the ones that have water. There is a clear and established connection between land values and the volume of water in the lower darling system. There is a clear connection between the communities Health and well being and the volume of access to water in the lakes and rivers. This not only applies to the irrigators, but to every station owner along the entire length of the river, as well as every resident of every town from Burke to Wentworth, the forgotten part of the Darling river and in fact the forgotten people of NSW.

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