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10/4/2018

**Murray-Darling Basin Plan: Five – year assessment
Productivity Commission**

Dear Commissioners

The Murray Darling Basin Plan covers a large area of 1,058,800 square kilometres or approximately 14% of the total area of Australia. How can one plan suit all of the area? When one travels out back passed Cobar one thing you will notice is that the trees grow smaller and then the only trees you will see is along a dry creek bed.

The MIA has to thank the men with a vision who came up with the plan to irrigate the area. However before irrigation, government of the day had to come up with the plan to build a Dam to store water, for the area was prone to drought. Western Riverina country could only cope with one sheep per four acres. The first reported area to produce a crop of wheat was near Coolamon in 1850, and most settlers stayed close to rivers and creeks. In 1882 -1884 three years of drought,... 1895 to 1903 nine years of drought, and in 1906 the Minister for public works introduced into parliament the Barren Jack and Murrumbidgee Canals Construction Bill. Murrumbidgee irrigation scheme failed to eventuate until 2010.

Labour government of James McGowan passed an enabling Act in December 1910 Murrumbidgee Irrigation Act, and Barren Jack Dam.

The cycle of the weather has a habit of repeating itself one hundred years later in 1982-83 the MIA was in drought, the Blowering Dam was empty and as was many other dams. The dry area farmers did not produce a crop.

In 1999 Victoria consulting economists came up with a report that recommended that water be traded like shares, and to separate ownership of land and water. Under the proposed new trading framework, water entitlements could be held by any person or entity, they would not need to own land and water. Water has become a business to be traded and sold,

and how do you trade rain that comes from the sky and it is free. **We forgot that the water cycle and life is one!**

Paul Pietroboni in 1946 purchased 25 acres; Farm 1488 Yenda and 3 generations have lived on the farm and made a good living. In 2000 I lost my husband Sergio, and in 2003 I sold the farm with 95 megalitres of water entitlements, plus 5 megalitres went for the environment.

In those days the farms were sold with the water, and without water you cannot grow a crop and the land becomes dry area.

Some years later the farm was sold and only 25 megalitres was left on the farm.

The Drought of 2001 to 2010 were hard times for the farming communities, Government of the day came up with the plan in 2007 in the middle of a drought, to protect the environment.. In 2010 the drought broke, rain and more rain.

On the weekend of 21.10.2010, my son in-law's rice farm came to life, frogs and more frogs they came out in their thousands, including fish, spiders and birds..

In 2012 the big floods, and the Riverina towns went under water and the people of Yenda lost everything.

In 2016 more rain and all the dams were full, the Murray and the Murrumbidgee Rivers were in flood, and water was lapping the Darlington point Road to Hay, many farmers had a good year and others went under water.

What do we know about our Rivers and Dams?

Eucumbene Dam forms Lake Eucumbene, the central storage of the Snowy Mountain scheme. – Construction Period May 1956 to May 1958.

Tantangara Dam impounds the head water of the Murrumbidgee River to diversion through the Murrumbidgee – Eucumbene Tunnel to Lake Eucumbene for storage. – Construction June 1958 to March 1960.

Happy Jack Dam Diverts the Tumut and Happy Jack Rivers directly into the Eucumbene Tumut Tunnel for storage in Lake Eucumbene. - Construction Sept 1958-June 1959.

Tooma Dam Impounds the Tooma River, a tributary of the Murray River. Construction

- Oct 1958 – March 1961.

Talbingo Dam creates head storage for the operation of Tumut 3 pumped storage. (Electricity) - Construction Dec 1967 – Oct 1970.

Jounama dam collects the water released Tumut 3 power station – Construction May 1966 – April 1968.

Blowering Dam provides storage of water from the Snowy-Tumut Development for release downstream to the Murrumbidgee irrigation areas. – Construction May 1965 to September 1968.

Our past governments gave us dams to generate electricity and irrigation. While today's governments have no vision of the future.

Yours Sincerely



Jan 1983 - Pietroboni family = Blowering Dam empty
After the drought - 1983 Yenda 4 inch of rain vines under water





1982-83 drought = Farm 1488 Cemetery Rd Yenda



1990 Farm 1488 Cemetery Rd – nothing stays the same



2016 Mildura Mighty Murray

Murrumbidgee River water on the side of Darlington Point road to Hay 2016 -Floods

