

Public submission to water trading rules issues paper by Michael Burrows on 10th March 2009.
[The ACCC is also interested in stakeholder views on any aspect of water trading not otherwise covered in this issues paper or in a particular question]

Another water story...

Born on the Murray River Wodonga in 1961, in Year 10 (1977) science and social studies we studied the degradation of this mighty river, the greenhouse effect, global warming and the like. Much to my disappointment, effective decisions have not improved our position.

Looking after our water supplies seems rather popular these days so I thought I'd put forward some of my own creative thoughts or resolutions.

Simply take a rather novel approach and use existing infrastructure, like Lake Hume - as a storage facility. There would be enough data to guesstimate at what height/velocity our precious resource naturally finds its way downstream during hot, warm, cool or dry seasons - and regulate the flow accordingly.

People downstream modify their water usage behaviours and farming brings its practices to the river not vice vie. Or better still, as far from the river as possible; and yes I do believe the Dam Bill is a right cock up, as landholders wanting to provide for their future were denied this luxury - umm necessity - or now non-existent entity.

In time, a snippet of our environment can begin to heal; natural flooding, ecosystems and breeding cycles restored, with the river no longer running a banker during our hottest and driest times. The saltation must be horrendous compared to the River Murray's most natural state; and I would take a percentage of the obscene dollars used to flush the mouth (a once naturally occurring phenomenon) as utilising this input will reduce this problem. (20% of the natural flow ever reaches the sea ? LISTEN?Our Land is Crying. Mary E. White.1997 ISBN 0 86417844 1).

A slice of the \$10b (offered by the Howard Government) would also be most welcome. Fully installed water tanks and solar panels for everyone - step right up everyone is a winner. These funds should be immediately forthcoming and simply not politicised during an election year. Reinventing the River Murray Commission (1917) was tried in 1988 nee Murray Darling Basin Commission and look at the storage levels or state of the river now.

\$10b could also be used to construct a water pipeline to Lake Alexandrina; the water would arrive in a useable state without affecting 'natural' river levels. Work crews moving along the corridor would surely stimulate suffering local economies, create jobs/apprenticeships and assist sustenance during difficult times. Gate valves or like infrastructure off the pipeline to fight fires, fill tankers, ration to needy communities, strengthen defence capabilities (flooding has stopped armies before); are some of many possibilities.

As for recycled water, it always has been - Evaporation, Condensation and Precipitation - only now the molecules must try and fight their way through a blanket of smog whilst ascending and descending ? and best we learn to like recycled water as it appears to be part of our future. 'Hell on Earth' - New Scientist magazine December 2003 pg 36 is an awakening read.

Salinity, fluoride, algae blooms, manufacturing, herbicides, pesticides and general pollution from other water users makes for one hell of a battle; of which the river could be slowly losing.

Restoring the river to its former majesty, may simply be a pipedream (excuse the pun),

after happily meandering through our beautiful valleys - destruction appears to be the river's final course.