

## Submission to the ACCC Murray-Darling Basin water markets enquiry

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I write this submission to the enquiry feeling as most irrigation farmers in the Southern connected basin that yet another enquiry will disappoint and see us one step closer to even greater financial hardship. Irrigators are increasingly despairing that there will ever be anyone who really listens to the solutions that would save irrigated farming and care for the environment. Nevertheless here is our story.

We are fourth generation irrigators on the family farm we purchased in 2006. In 2011 we purchased a neighbouring 200 ha irrigation property with the intention to drought proof our mainly cropping enterprise which includes 850 ha of mallee country. We own 120 megs high security and 120 megs low security. Since 2011 we have purchased water at up to \$300 meg to finish crops. The prices water has risen to in the last couple of years has made it impossible for us to purchase water and we have watched crops with 8t potential yield 2-3 t.

We sat in the 'town hall' style meeting in Kerang and along with our neighbours we listened to the great ideas to deal with water from many wise and experienced people in the room. The very idea that you can own water without being either a farmer or the environment is completely ludicrous and just because that is how things are does not mean that is how they must stay. We are not the smart or the lucky country when we see our dairy farmers selling up and water going to those who have the deepest pockets. We will never be able to compete with almond plantations owned by multi nationals. When water is owned by non-farmers they can do what they like year to year. If the tax problem is too high, a wealthy water owner can simply carry over their water and sell it when it pleases them. I can't water crops any old time and I can't pay in excess of \$300 for water. Sometimes the cash flow doesn't allow me to pay \$200!

It isn't rocket science to see that one way to alleviate the stress of high water prices on irrigators is to disallow non farmer water owners to carry water over. Get that water in the market on a yearly basis. It would be even better to take that water, pay them out and make that water available for us to feed and clothe Australia. The water market is killing us and we can't hang on for yet another enquiry with no teeth to disappoint us again. Please have the balls to actually do something. We can't have any more puppets of the MDBA handing down yet another useless report. Many of us are going broke, all be it slowly and painfully but broke just the same.

Gavan and Bernardine Robinson

Kerang