

[REDACTED]

To the panel of the ACCC inquiry. Murray Darling Basin.

Dear Sir, Madam,

Please find enclosed my submission into the MDB inquiry as recommended by the Minister for Water, the Rt Honorable David Littleproud MP and the Minister for the Environment the Rt Honorable Sussan Lea MP for Murray.

Hoping that my contribution into the inquiry by the ACCC can have some bearing on a fair and reasonable outcome

Faithfully

Kenneth Spence.

[REDACTED]



To the Panel of the ACCC Inquiry into Water Markets in the Murray –Darling Basin

I will introduce myself. My name is Kenneth Frederick Spinks, born [REDACTED], a retired dryland and irrigation farmer from the Lowbidgee floodplain system, western NSW. I have had contact with rivers in this area both in drought and flood over my lifetime, and have experienced the effects of both on farming and township enterprises.

The ACCC criteria, I consider, to be very limited in it's agenda, being solely on water markets, and should investigate the past history of the rivers on the western side of the Great Dividing Range before the introduction of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. To have a complete picture of the western rivers from Federation to the present, we need to look at the controls by the Federal and State governments in the past, and the present control of the waters by users and consumers.

Australia is the driest continent on Earth, and has an evaporation rate of 150cm per annum.

After Federation Burrunjuck and Hume weirs were constructed to control the river levels of the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers and to moderate Winter and Spring flooding from snow melts and the low summer river levels. These constructions were then able to supply water for irrigation development which increased in areas with more government constructions along the waterways.

The State government had the responsibility to issue licenses to pump these conserved waters for irrigation and township supply to fixed areas approved on the licences. During flood situations, water could be extracted at no extra cost on the licensed area. This criteria had control over the amount of water that could be extracted (eg rice farming area).

The formation of MDB Plan had merit as it considered the water uses and the environment, but over time, different criteria was injected into the Plan and altered the original concept. This has resulted in what the ACCC is investigating at present.

Authority was divested from Government control into the hands of traders, dealers and buyers, not only Australian farmers, but investors into Australia from other parts of the world who have no river irrigation farming land, or any interest in farms. These investors had purchased megalitres of water at a low price, and hold it behind structures built by Australian taxpayers monies. This water can be put on the market (auction) like selling a flock of sheep and sold at a huge profit for the seller (eg \$970 per megalitre) This price per megalitre is beyond the general security irrigator to produce a crop eg dairy farmer, lucerne grower and is having a detrimental effect on these industries.

The persons – dealers, traders – do not own this water, the buyers do not own it! This water, essential for life, belongs to all Australians – it is finite, and belongs to ALL!

In the present situation, it appears that the rainfall on the river catchment and run-off areas belong to the traders and buyers with the most money. This is a deplorable situation and needs to be rectified.

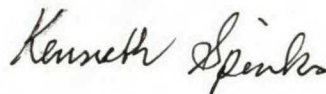
One solution would be for persons, and also overseas investment organisations, who hold water entitlements, to have their entitlements confiscated and be re-imbursed with the moneys paid by them for their original entitlements. This could have a dampening effect on the present situation of high water costs affecting general security users.

Conclusion May I suggest that the ACCC ask these questions to clarify the current situation.

- Who owns the water?
- Who gave authority to sell the water?
- Who has the authority to buy the water?
- Who has the authority to hold water behind storages owned by the Australian population?

I trust that the information submitted will be of importance and taken into consideration in your deliberations.

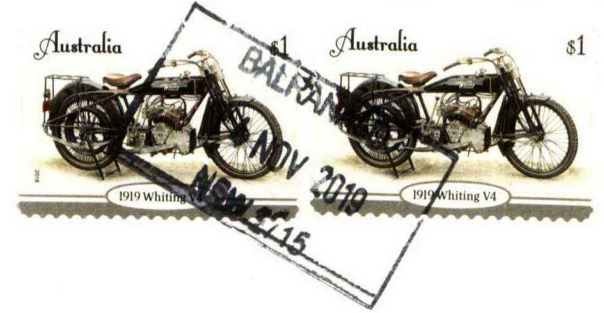
Yours sincerely,



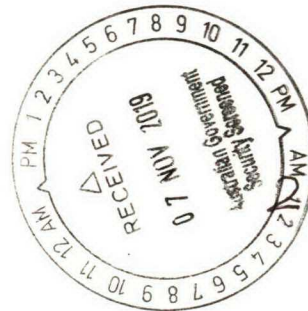
Kenneth Spinks

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05/11/2019



TO DIRECTOR
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