

John Lolicato  
"Whymoul"  
BARHAM NSW 2732

8<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

Dr Wendy Craik  
Chief Executive  
Murray-Darling Basin Commission  
GPO Box 409  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Wendy,

As you are no doubt aware the river and creek systems between the Murray and Edwards River are on the point of being environmental catastrophes from lack of water.

This is most evident on the Wakool River which has been shut down since the end of April 2007. Over this 7 month period this once mighty river has been reduced to a series of intermediate stagnant holes, many of which are drying up as we speak or otherwise becoming highly saline swill pools causing large fish kills or making our native fish and crustaceans easy prey for predators, such as pelicans, cormorants, pigs and worst of all poachers.

We acknowledge these streams are controlled by N.S.W. and we realise the dilemmas that N.S.W. has because it has very little water available to it to share between its many domestic and stock requirements. However, due to the extremely critical position that these streams are in at present, we believe that the M.D.B.C has an environmental and community responsibility to help reduce this disastrous situation.

May we suggest a possible solution? There has been approximately 200,000ML of water flow over the S.A border to provide their perceived requirements since July and this figure is likely to increase on a monthly basis. All this water plus part of Victoria and N.S.W's requirement flows parallel to the Wakool and Niemur Rivers. The Murray River at Barham at present is flowing at approximately 5000ML a day and the Edward at around 200ML a day. If there was a flush of approximately 8000ML put down the Wakool River to refill the holes and then around 100ML daily to maintain a small flow this would be like the 'kiss of life' to one of the best recognised native fish breeding streams in the M.D.B.

At a recently convened meeting of the Executive of the Wakool River Water Users and Pumpers Association, there were 3 resolutions adopted:-

1. That we request that an environmental flow of water be provided into the Wakool River to reduce the environmental and social disaster that is happening the full length of the river at present.
2. We recommend that all pumps above the size of 2" cease to operate at this critical time. The 2" pumps are to be used solely for essential Stock & Domestic water. This reflects the fact that many landowners only water supply is from a river or creek. This condition is to be reviewed regularly or until the river has a reasonable flow over Stoney Crossing.

3. There needs to be an immediate embargo on fishing until there is a flow in the river.

Wendy, we acknowledge the competing demands for the very small amount of water that may be available but if there was ever an opportunity for the M.D.B.C to use a small quantity to achieve a huge and immediate environmental goal, then utilising part of the 13 GL to replenish the holes in the Wakool River is your big opportunity.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the fact that the shortest and most efficient way of getting water to the lower Murray is by utilising the Mulwala Canal to drop water into the Wakool River and then back to the Murray.

I cannot emphasise enough how critical the situation is in the system and every day that we delay using some environmental water for the system the more catastrophic the effects will be both in immediate and into the long term.

Yours sincerely,

John Lolicato.  
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c.c. David Harriss  
Digby Jacobs