

My submission will be short and shiny and without frills and technical detail.

Barry Bishop [REDACTED] 20-8-2017

Request.

That the water flows down the Murray River do not fluctuate excessively and therefore maintain a reasonable river level at all times.

Our family own an irrigation property of twenty five hectares situated ten kilometres north of Swan Hill that for most of its life operated as a dairy farm.

We have owned the property for some three years and during that time have extensively remodelled the farm layout driven by a professionally developed whole farm plan from 118 irrigation bays down to 22 bays to make the farm more efficient and productive.

We have in cooperation with Goulburn Murray Water agreed to close down and relace a inefficient delivery channel with a pump that delivers our irrigation water through a structure of piped irrigation and a in farm channel.

We are presently in the process of systematically planting improved annual, summer, winter and annual perennial pastures which while an expensive exercise will greatly increase the farms efficient use of irrigation water.

As our farm has a substantial river frontage we are acutely aware of the river levels on a daily basis and are continually frustrated at the fluctuating river levels that we estimate can vary between 1 and 1.2 metres over a few days.

Obviously we do not have the benefit of a weir pool downstream of Swan Hill such as Echuca, Robinvale and Mildura enjoy by having a constant river to both pump from and enjoy the social benefits that flow from such infrastructure.

It is my understanding that there are a number of locations suitable for a weir pool downstream of Swan Hill but none suitable close to the city itself.

To quote a absolute fact during Easter this year (2017) the river was at a very low level affecting most of the pumps and certainly having a negative affect

effect on our tourist industry as the river was in many parts simply too low to enjoy any boating.

This must be a change of strategy as when I had some involvement with the River Runners (MDB officers) say from 1992 to 2006 there was a clear understanding that the minimal flow rate would always be adequate to maintain a viable river tourist industry in Swan Hill.

It is also my understanding that in the Murray Darling Basin Plan the minimal flow down the Murray would increase which if implemented would effectively solve my issue and I suspect produce a much healthier river.

Second Request.

A review of how environmental water is managed with the intent to more closely follow nature and also to utilise our water more efficiently for both the environment and the productive sector.

As with the strategy of maintaining adequate river flows the management of environmental water appears to have lost direction.

We always believed that in wet years with an abundance of water the forests would be flooded and the Environmental Managers would be able to utilise irrigators being prepared to temporarily sell their water for environmental use.

In the dryer years the opposite should be in place with the Environmental Managers being prepared to sell back into the market for irrigators usage.

This would mirror the way nature flooded the wet lands when we had a wet year and retain the river flows in drier years when we had unregulated river.

Third Request.

That the flash flooding and therefore flash draining process to sustain river red gums is remodelled to alleviate the rapid discharge of forest contaminated water into a falling river stream.

I believe the linkage to the Red Gum Forest management process increases the risk of a black water outbreak which could be reduced with research into the management techniques presently utilised.

Research in other parts of the world such as New Guinea indicate that quick discharge back into the river is likely to result in fish kills in those particular areas .

Barry Bishop