

11/07/2010

To Amanda Chadwick,

**RE: IPART submission**

The following submission details the unique circumstances of the licenced area of the Bogan River downstream from Nyngan.

The Bogan River is geographically a very short, narrow river, with exposure to a very limited catchment area. As a result, it is rare for there to be a constant, albeit meagre, flow over any twelve month cycle. The Bogan River downstream from Nyngan where these licences exist is in a semi-arid region with an annual rainfall of only 14 inches/350 mls. This naturally limits any opportunity of a local rainfall event creating a river flow. As a result of this geography and climate, the Bogan River is unpredictable and unreliable, mostly dry, very rarely reaching river levels appropriate for irrigating.

When overflow water from the Duck and Gunningbar Creeks reaches the unregulated Bogan River, the first stakeholder is the Mine at Girilambone. Its claim is justified as there are economic spin offs for the larger community in that area.

All those landowners along and sometimes one property removed from the River then access any remaining water for "stock and domestic" requirements, which is of course is at "no cost" and legal.

Finally, the remaining, if any, Bogan River flow may reach the licenced irrigators who are charged a hefty licence fee. Most times the flow is non-existent or very minimal and too low to extract. It is obvious then that extraction from the river to irrigate is only an opportune event and there are often long, extended periods between those opportunities.

Originally, my licence was granted to allow me to grow fodder in order to drought proof my property during dry periods. Instead, I now receive inordinately high charges for water I cannot extract from a dry river bed, at times I can least afford it.

In an attempt to resolve this huge financial burden for water we did not have available, we approached the Commonwealth Government regarding a "Buy Back" of these licences. The Government declined the offer because the Bogan River was such a small river and there was a limited history of recorded flows and subsequently not enough evidence of social or environmental benefit to warrant the "buy back" of the licences.

In contradiction, despite the Government rating us of little significance as a water group, we are charged disproportionately excessive water charges.

Currently, we are charged on a meg/ha basis, our preferred method of measurement due to the cost of installing direct meters on the river itself.

We are asking simply for our charges to reflect the Bogan River area we live in and the effect a low rainfall and restricted catchment area has on water availability for us.

Regarding the notion of "user pays" and the requirement to share the management and infrastructure costs, there is very little capital investment – a water level gauge at Monkey Bridge and Gongolgon only. This reflects poor value for money in the opinion of the licencees,

For State revenue purposes, the four farms with irrigation licences (one of which has never irrigated) downstream from Nyngan, the Bogan River represents a revenue source of little consequence, however, the amount imposed on each irrigator is disproportionately excessive, adversely impacting on our livelihood. The last ten years of drought in this area rendered us incapable of paying hefty licence fees for a long term, dry, river bed.

Please take the above details into consideration when making a decision on future charges for the Bogan River Irrigators.

Thank you for your time.

Stuart MacAlpine