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16<sup>th</sup> November 2005

Mr Jim Cox  
Chief Executive Officer  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal  
Level 2, 22 Market Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Cox

**RE: Macquarie Valley Water Price Increases**

Our business has been involved in irrigation in the Macquarie Valley for many years and there are a number of issues that we oppose and to which we wish to draw to your immediate attention.

Of major concern to is the present cost share arrangement which we consider to be most unethical. Why is it that the Macquarie Valley Irrigators use only 26% of the water flow from the Macquarie Valley Irrigation Schemes and charged for all water delivered, including losses and yet we are being charged 100% of the 'user share' of costs? Why is it that users such as the environment and stock and domestic incur massive losses and storage costs for which we have to foot the bill? Our irrigation schemes are charged on a system of all water delivered including losses so why can't other users be treated accordingly on a user pay system. This is not a level playing field and is most unfair and inequitable. This situation needs to be addressed immediately and **brought into line with the principles of cost sharing as outlined in the 1994 CoAG Agreement.**

Another issue that is of concern to us is Government Policy costs. It has been drawn to our attention that DNR proposes to charge customers for most of its Water Resource Management expenditure. Why? Other government departments don't pass on their costs to farmers so why should farmers be slugged with this potential burden of Water Resource Management expenditure, especially when farmers don't have any input in the decision making process regarding these services that the Government considers to be in our best interests.

**How about a fair go for a change?** It is time farmers were shown a bit of respect rather than being 'kicked in the guts' all the time. In other words, don't bite the hand that feeds you – it has disastrous consequences as what happened in Europe during WWII, if we may use the analogy.

Your urgent consideration regarding these matters, together with others raised by our peak bodies MRFF and NSWIC would be most appreciated. We would also appreciate the opportunity to attend a public hearing in Dubbo to discuss these issues further.

Yours faithfully

**RA & ML Stevenson**  
Stevenson Family Partnership