

Submission to IPART- Bulk Water Prices from 2010

The school wishes to object in the strongest terms to the proposed increase in regulated surface water for the Peel River.

While these increases will have extreme impacts on most irrigators in the valley, the impacts upon Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School will be dramatic.

The school operates a farming enterprise of some 189 hectares, approximately half of which is irrigated from river and alluvial bores. The water is used to grow crops for educational use and also for maintaining sporting ovals and facilities. Farrer is the second largest boys boarding school in NSW and the states largest government boarding school. We have been recognised as the Vocational Education and Training Schools Excellence award in 2007 for agricultural programs specifically in regard to links with the Cotton Industry.

As our fees are fixed by government we have no flexibility in our cost structure and so the impacts of such a large price increase would jeopardise the schools ability to maintain its agricultural and sporting programs into the future.

We are already using subsurface irrigation systems to enhance efficiencies as well as capturing rainwater from all buildings. Newer technologies of soil water conductive measurements are being implemented to further enhance education in irrigation methodologies and techniques.

The joint impacts of an increase in bulk water prices and also reduced water availability due to the proposed Peel Valley Water Sharing Plan will significantly diminish the ability of the school to build future workforce capacity in areas of need identified in the AgriFoods Environmental Scan 2009.

We ask that our circumstances be addressed by your review.

Graeme Harris,
Head Teacher Agriculture / VET Coordinator
Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School,
585 Calala Lane
Tamworth,
NSW 2340
0267648660
fax 0267648669

Steve Cavanagh
PRINCIPAL