To any clear thinking, responsible, representative of the Australian Government,

I write with deep concern for my country. The proposed Basin Plan is a ludicrous plan that amounts to nothing less than *economic genocide* – a systematized elimination of food producing capacity in the largest and most efficient food producing area in the nation: the Murray-Darling Basin. This area produces food for not only the residents of Australia, which includes politicians, and members of the Greens party, but also generates hundreds of millions of dollars in export revenue.

We are a nation that from the outset has been totally reliant on water availability, and the support of the government, in order to promote & excel in food production. This ensures that Australia remains a wealthy & self sufficient nation in an uncertain global arena. The Murray – Darling Basin is a prime example of this. Prior to this, the area was essentially desert – and deserted. The introduction of irrigation systems and other measures led to undreamed of expansion in food markets, and ensured that Australia was a profitable nation. The plan to reverse the irrigation will decimate the country's earning capacity, and more importantly, will ruin the earning capacity and livelihood of over 100,000 citizens in the rural backbone of Australia. This will not look good in our grandchildren's history lessons in 20 years time.

Are we staring Communism in the face? Is the current government, with the dubious help of the greens party "Hell–Bent" on bringing Australian industry to its knees? I remind you of the Mining Tax. The proposed Basin Plan is a similar type of mentality, under a different name. I also remind you of the economic policies of eastern Germany in the 1960s – there is a parallel.

I appeal to reason – the Food Bowl of Australia has barely emerged from the worst drought in History; a period wracked by heartbreak, suicide, and broken families, driven by the unrelenting pressure of Mother Nature at her Cruelest. Are we about to see this continued for the long term, not at the hand of Nature, but at the hand of a myopic government that cannot do the right thing by its literal breadwinners? This will spell economic disaster for Australia as a Nation, and for countless rural citizens.

When mid-western NSW was first explored, the surveyor general of the time remarked that the region was 'inhabited only by those without the means to escape'. Since irrigation, this statement has been proved false, and the Murray-Darling Basin has earned its name as "The food Bowl of Australia" and indeed for Australasia as well If this ludicrous and treacherous scheme is imposed on the region, the statement will return to its full meaning as we have never seen before. A massive area, spanning from Moree in the north to Shepparton in the south & west all the way to Mildura will be returned to a Saline Desert, once again populated by those "without the means to escape"

This will cost the government dearly – massively increased social security cost, and loss of tax income as an extra 100,000 people join the unemployment queue. Can the economy sustain this? There will be a population shift. Any persons that can will be migrating to the capital cities in search of work. Can our struggling urban infrastructure cope with this? The remnant will be the elderly, and the lower socio-economic classes. Can our social & public systems handle the change?

There is an environmental consideration to this. The ecosystem has adapted well to the Irrigation schemes that were put in place before we were born, however, the environment will not return exactly to its original state if the basin plan is imposed. Millions of hectares of once fertile pasture and cropping land will be reduced to a salty useless wasteland useful only as a breeding ground for dust storms and the toughest of noxious weeds.

Please, this proposal of "legislated drought" needs to be repudiated. The ramifications of this *treacherous, imperceptive and rash* proposal are far reaching & will directly affect the prosperity of the nation. There needs to be a coordinated & comprehensive movement to not only overturn the current proposal, but also to provide for future growth in the food production industry. <u>In this</u>

country, rain is not enough. We need a system of dams that will collect water in times of plenty, to provide water in times of drought.

The cause of this crisis can be traced to the 2007 Water Act, which, with glaring imbalance favors the environment. The Basin Plan committee has colluded and capitalized on this error in legislation. The obvious action is for this to be corrected IMMEDIATELY without delay.

Yours Sincerely,

Roger Shemilt