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WATER DRILLING CONTRACTORS

The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP.,
Minister for Agriculture,
Parliament House,
Canberra, ACT 2600.

30th. Nov. 2014

Dear Sir ,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide some input to the forthcoming White Paper.

Submission on Droughts and Water Resources

Drought is defined as a lack of moisture to sustain adequate sub-soil water for cropping and/or potable water supplies for stock and humans.

If you don't have water everything else is irrelevant.

Drought "proofing" is to ensure adequate reserves within economic limits.

The source of water depends on the geology and geography and the need per property.
The geology for groundwater - the geography for surface gathering (rivers and dams)

For drought reliable water - groundwater has major pluses - no evaporation no leakages and use which can be monitored reliably.

The IGA (Page 65) is what to do after the drought has occurred - not what to do to prevent or modify it.

(Page 66) Measures to prepare for drought by carrying out works to "ensure" water availability when needed most should be considered using ground water ("when available). Dams are good when it is raining. The use of tax deductions in the year of expenditure would be the most likely avenue to encourage such works being carried out. It certainly delays revenue to the treasury in the first instance but increases payments in the long term with ongoing more stable income. It reduces the need for ongoing hand outs.

(Page 69) The original drought proofing in the 1970's was for 150% tax deduction for capital expenditure on bores for stock, domestic and irrigation.

See attached copy of letter sent Simon Crean in 1985. nothing has really changed. This has been on my mind for over thirty years.

When discussing dams it would help if a sign on the discussion table saying " Menindee Lake evaporates every year the same amount of water as allocated for irrigation from the Murray Darling Basin system." was displayed.

The GAB program is a special case . The shutting down by Wayne Swan pulling the money out of the system in 2013 to try to fix his budget disrupted the GAB as much as the Live Cattle Fiasco without any publicity.

Even though an attempt is being made to reactivate it much damage has been done with departments destaffed and only a minimal amount of money set for the next five years. With \$3m. per year divided between four competing states it is unlikely that a continuing program will be achieved. It has been indicated that the current years financing is held up with bureaucrats advising the funds may not be ready until June. Two or three bores deeper than average and with special casing required would blow the years budget.

The ADIA has supplied volunteered members to the QGABAC since the start and even though significant improvements of head pressure throughout the system have been achieved it is still a long way from completion of the original objective. The state departments still have to develop the guts to say to landholders "This is a national resource and if you can't fund your share now we will fix the bore and put a lien on the property to be settled when the property is sold or you are able to pay your share" Fund the GAB as it was envisaged when the council was formed.

Additional Item.

Some of the bores along the Namoi and Gwydir systems are pumping water into turkey nests to increase the ability to get the water onto the crop quicker when required. This of course leads to water pumped from safe storage below ground to an evaporation pond. A study on water pumped to storage and water used on the field may well indicate that more bores should be installed - with no increase in allocation but with less water wasted to evaporation and more available for cropping.

of the management on our operations.

A.)

(R.A.M.E.)