



Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to comment on the Murray Darling Basin Plan and the inquiry that is being held.

To me the over-riding question must be 'Do we want a healthy functioning river'? If the answer is yes then more water must be supplied to the river, one way or another. As irrigation areas have never paid for themselves it would seem the best thing to do would be to reduce the consumptive use of water for irrigation.

One of the main problems confronting this country is the very low cost of water. This means that it is the scarcity of water that encourages the efficient use of water rather than its price. So in poor rainfall years when allocations are low the transfer price of water rises and this sets the market price of water. However the price paid by irrigators does not rise to the same degree and so some irrigators use the water to generate a lower return per megalitre than if the water had been sold.

The price of water must be increased in Australia to promote its efficient use. This also applies to households.

I object to spending huge sums of money on dubious infrastructure upgrades.

John Burge