

A Fair Go

Fellow Australians

We are a collection of farmers, small business people and First Australians resurrecting the spirit of the Jerilderie Letter written 140 years ago.

Living with our families in the Southern Riverina area of New South Wales, we represent successive generations of First Nations and family farms who have invested in the nation's vision to unleash the economic potential of this mighty region with hard **ꞗꞗ** yakka that feeds and clothes the nation.

Our predominantly family-run businesses fall within what has become known as the Murray Darling Basin.

Today our families live in the shadow of a Plan designed to address a perceived imbalance between the environment and agriculture. Even the most powerful will say that no one is happy with the Plan that by any fairness test, has failed our rural communities ... and isn't *that* the truth.

It's not a crime to be a farmer who underpins the livelihood of major regional cities and towns that depend on agriculture fed by rivers and lakes. After all it's an agricultural activity that has sustained mankind for over 40, 000 years.

When we signed on to the plan we were told we had to have++

- ꞗ **F**aith in government that the plan would always be adaptive
- ꞗ **F**aith in government that the goal posts wouldn't change
- ꞗ **F**aith in government promises that there would be no third-party impact on our community and our families
- ꞗ **F**aith in government that they would operate the rivers responsibly and value our precious resource like we have
- ꞗ **...AND** we trusted that at the end of it all, there would be a secure future for our children, grand children and for the proud worldwide reputation enjoyed by Australian agriculture.

The Plan's failure to deliver each and every one of those assurances has destroyed our faith so that today we now have ++

- ꞗ Targeted volumes of water rather than environmental improvement as a measure of the Plan's success
- ꞗ Catastrophic wastage stemming from a failure by those who run the rivers to place value on every drop
- ꞗ Threats to our guaranteed access to water from the Snowy Scheme created when agriculture and power generation were equal beneficiaries
- ꞗ Collapsing and imploding communities suffering from instability and a lack of certainty
- ꞗ Fatigue and disillusion brought about by efforts to work with bureaucrats and governments who continue to ignore and belittle us.

So what, pray tell, do we want?

- ≈ Is it so unreasonable to want to stop the powerful from pursuing the development of a Disney world of unnatural fauna and flora, created at the cost of communities that these ideologues wish to destroy?
- ≈ Is it so unreasonable to want to challenge a Plan which measures its success by the amount of water it removes from agriculture instead of environmental results?
- ≈ Is it so unreasonable to ask for a halt to the introduction of any major Basin Plan initiatives until battle lines and bitterness are removed and there's a settling of the smoke, dust and drought?
- ≈ Is it so unreasonable to ask for our social, political and scientific elite to stop using our farms and the environment as pawns in an ideological battle that they've created?
- ≈ Is it so unreasonable to ask that powerbrokers cease focusing on volumes of water and begin to focus on celebrating environmental success in which we – those who live and work and raise families on the rivers - have an active, willing and indispensable contribution to make now and into the future?
- ≈ Is it so unreasonable to suggest that we want to take our families to visit our major cities where we can hold our heads high among our urban and metropolitan peers who recognise us for the contribution we make to the prosperity and fabric of our nation?

Is it so unreasonable to ask for the fair go that we've come to share and cherish?

We, the undersigned

in Government

A Fair Go

Fellow Australians

We are a collection of farmers, small business people and First Australians resurrecting the spirit of the Jerilderie Letter written 160 years ago.

*Living with our families in the Southern Riverina area of New South Wales we represent second, third, fourth and even fifth generation farmers who have invested in the nation's vision to unleash the economic potential of this mighty region with hard ~~work~~ *yakkha* that feeds and clothes the nation.*

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Today, our families live in the shadow of a Plan designed to address a perceived imbalance between the environment and agriculture. The most powerful will say that no one is happy with the Plan and any fairness test, has failed our rural communities.... and isn't that the truth.

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