

16 JUL 2012

DATE RECEIVED

14 July 2012

Queensland Competition Authority

Attention: Mr Angus MacDonald

Dear Mr MacDonald

I, John Harris of Fernvale have two water allocations on the Brisbane River and I am deeply disturbed at the proposed water pricing on the Brisbane River.

My allocation is 80 megalitres in total. This is very small compared to the size of the property of 614 hectares.

In January 2011 I lost both pumps sites including underground mains, suction lines, foot valves etc and the actual pump site area which I am now trying to restore and stabilise.

I have lived on this property all my life growing small crops and pasture grasses producing food and fibre for the domestic and export trade. Electricity is not available to either site and I irrigate with diesel motors, so I do not irrigate unnecessarily, but I believe responsibly. The terms of reference given to the QCA by the Queensland Government appear to force maximum use at all times.

I can understand the need to restrict maximum usage in dry seasons, but to be forced to use the allocation in wet years is irresponsible. The government's aim is to see that the water goes to "Best & Highest use". Farming in the main is a supply and demand situation. Who can predict costs and prices in advance?

All the farmers who have produced average crops and have spent a lot of money on infrastructure, underground mains, pumps, motors etc are going to be disadvantaged by so called economic rationalisation.

Another disturbing fact is the Ministerial direction recommending charges for electricity (for what use) and recreation. What has recreation got to do with irrigation? Previous governments have recognised that NO charge will be made for water directed for irrigation.

There is a large number of family farms on this section of the river that take pride in keeping the riparian areas and banks clean and free of noxious weeds and vermin. I have installed contour banks on my property in conjunction with SEQ catchments to deliver cleaner runoff water back into the system. I obtained advice from the Department of Environment and Resource Management and have cleaned up tons of debris and dead trees – all a benefit to the river system.

I was of the understanding that the government was going to assist farmers to produce quality Australian products at an affordable cost. I wonder! Therefore, I oppose any charges and taxes being levied on this system.

If the government proceeds with the charges, all that will be achieved is financial, hardship and stress for most farmers battling rising production costs on all fronts.

Yours Sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of John Harris.

John Harris  
Mid Brisbane River Irrigator