

MPII UPDATE

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

2010 will be a year to remember with our rivers flooding and a full water allocation announced in December. Many of you will be dealing with the challenges of floods, the disappointment of lost opportunity and the frustration of trying to harvest crops between showers of rain. I trust that those of you along the river have not been subject to too much damage and that many of you will be reading this newsletter post harvest with a satisfying result.

You will have been privy to the issues surrounding the release of flows from the Snowy system with mixed views on the authority's actions. After much investigation it appears that there was no other choice than to let some flows go due to contractual arrangements in the catchments. It is my understanding that due to negotiations with Snowy Hydro and the various government bodies the releases have now ceased.

Our CEO Jennie Hehir has been back and forth to Canberra over the past two months consulting with the Murray Darling Basin Authority, key politicians and their staff over the guide to the proposed Murray Darling Basin Plan. We were saddened to hear of Mike Taylor, Chairman of the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) resignation as he has been very understanding to deal with and shown consideration for regional Australia and the agricultural sector. Unfortunately we cannot say the same for the rest of the MDBA. In our view Mike has made a stand by resigning and we hope that Minister Burke will live true to his word stating that his aim is to deliver a Murray Darling Basin Plan with a triple bottom line.

Thank you to those of you that have taken the time to write a submission to the MDBA, the Senate and House of Representative inquiries. If you have not managed to send one in as yet, it is still not too late. As Jennie mentioned in her last mailout, numbers will hold a lot of weight and a one pager will suffice with your heartfelt views on how less water in the region will effect your life.

All of the MPII submissions are posted on our revamped website for your perusal.

I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy healthy and prosperous New Year.

Kind regards

Murray Shaw

Guide to the proposed Murray Darling Basin Plan: As you are all aware, after much consultation and the regional public forums, the guide has received plenty of publicity and the initiation of the Senate Committee and House of Representatives inquiries.

Murray Shaw, Russell Ford and other stakeholder representatives met with key MDBA technical staff on the 17 December to discuss some of the issues of concern in our system. Our representatives were able to convey to the technical staff how environmental watering in our region has been satisfactorily achieved with minimal flows in comparison to what the Authority is recommending through the models they have used in their guide. Murray and Russell emphasized the need for the MDBA to seek local knowledge from government agencies who have been—*continued overpage*

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Inside this issue:

From the Chairman	1
MDBP Plan continued	1
Membership	2
From the CEO	2
YACTAC Booklet	2
New Website	2

mpii.org.au

Check out our
updated website
more info on page 2.

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MPII MEMBERSHIP

At the MPII AGM held on the 20 October 2010, a motion was moved and carried—That MPII offer High Security water entitlement holders the opportunity to become members of the organisation to represent their interests in conjunction with General Security entitlement holders. As a result, many of you have taken up this offer and we trust that you will see the benefits of belonging to our organisation. We would also like to thank the many General Security members that have already paid their levy collection. Without your support MPII would simply not be able to operate at the level that is required in water policy and reform. We understand that for many, funding is tight due to the multitude of financial challenges being faced. Another reminder invoice will be sent early in the New Year to those that have not paid or informed us that they do not wish to be members. You are not compelled to pay the levy collection as it is a voluntary contribution. Jennie encourages you to forward her your email address via email so that you can be added to her emailing list and receive regular up to date information on water policy, allocations and general information.

NEW MPII WEBSITE NOW UP AND RUNNING

It's taken a while, but our new website is now up and running. Check out



the easy navigation between pages, updates of media releases, submissions and the like that can be easily located. Some new pictures for the “Gallery” are required, so please send any suitable photos to Jennie or notify her of any additional links you would like uploaded.

MDB Plan continued—working with the system for many years and understand the requirements to satisfy the environmental watering. At this stage the Prime Minister is setting a deadline for the completion of the plan of January 2012. However MPII are of the view that this deadline is simply not achievable. Therefore, hopefully common sense will prevail and the Senate and Parliamentary inquiries will prove that the timeframe is by far too premature.

YACTAC BOOKLET:

It will be exiting to launch the release of the long overdue YACTAC Booklet which should be ready around the 17 January 2011. YACTAC has invited Minister Tony Burke to the banks of the Billabong to launch the booklet early February. YACTAC members will receive a copy in due course and take this opportunity to thank all involved in the compiling of the booklet.

From the CEO:

Another year has rolled by with water policy continually niggling away after the frustration of drought and now flooding rains. At least Mother Nature has proven to the die hard climate change boffins who have been preaching that the last ten years of drought were in fact what we were to expect going forward, is probably not the case. None of us deny climate variability or marginal changes to temperatures etc, however the extremes some have been predicting in my view have been absurd. I guess we can be grateful for finally receiving a wetter season 12 months prior to the Murray Darling Basin Plan's initial timeframe of being signed off. I thank those of you that attended the MDBA stakeholder consultation meeting in Griffith, Deniliquin and Narrandera to convey your concerns with the guide to the proposed MDB Plan. At the end of the day those of us that represent you collectively battle to get the message across in the confines of meeting rooms in Canberra. As we've stated before numbers seem to have the greatest impact. I also thank those of you that have taken the time to send in a submission during this very hectic time of year. If you would still like to send off a submission I am told that they will be considered and I am happy to assist you with your submission. As 2010 draws to a close I would like to show my gratitude to the MPII executive who are always ready to offer support. I am very fortunate to have identities such as Murray Shaw, Richard Sleight, Russell Ford and Rel Heckendorf to call on for advice in relation to water policy and the running of the system. I also thank David Merrylees for attending a few meeting through the year that I could not attend.

In closing I wish you all a happy Christmas and a 2011 filled with positive and prosperous outcomes!

Kind regards *Jennie Hehir*