

Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association Inc.

making every drop count

How floodplain harvesting licencing affects you

Water is the lifeblood of this community, floodplain harvesting (FPH) involves the take of water from a floodplain in times of flooding and is an historical source of water for our local producers making up 30% of our total water usage.

Currently NSW are implementing a compliance and licencing reform but NSW are designing it without any consideration to social and economic factors in the communities in the northern basin.

Key Points on the proposal:

- Legal limits **must** be recognised, but decisions have to consider the **socio-economic impacts** on community to achieve these limits.
- To be compliant with legal limits there will be a reduction in floodplain harvesting water which will have a direct flow on to the community with an estimated **on average loss of \$92M¹ of economic activity** transferred to environmental benefits within our own valley.
- Contrary to opinion, downstream outcomes suggest if you removed floodplain harvesting from the northern basin entirely you **would not** impact Lower Darling or southern allocations by any more than 2%².
- **NSW plans to force these rules in by 1 July 2021**, without any transitional arrangements potentially increasing the community impact **if it floods as it did in 2011 or 2012, removing \$1.1B from our economy in the first two-years of licencing.**
- This form of access happens when our rivers and creeks and floodplains are full and spilling and take at these times is a small portion of total flows available during a flood.

We can't afford for government to put us in a man-made drought while we are still recovering from this one



HAVE YOUR SAY and provide a submission to government on these rules, as a businesses owner and as a community member.
**Ask someone, have they submitted?
Our voice must be heard.**

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/4a4cad1c7e5d48c6aa495030051d64d9>

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

Done right, licencing provides certainty and consistency to this important source of water for our industry, our community and others who also rely on floods, as well as the environment. Licencing makes it accountable, measurable and manageable like all other forms of water used by the industry.

Done wrong, it will put our region into extended drought as we miss the chance to access water in the next flood with no greater environmental benefit.

Every \$1 lost at the farm gate will take a minimum of \$2.18 from our economy¹, means less money, less jobs and less families in our community.

¹ Calculated from the average volume being reduced by the opportunity cost to the community per foregone ML which is \$1742/ML (\$800/ML farm gate times 2.178 ABS community multiplier).

² Statement by DPIEW staff during community consultation in the Gwydir Valley, February 2021.



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Previous reforms tell us, the social and economic impacts of water recovered in the Gwydir are significant.

This compliance and licencing program is just like a second round of the Basin Plan for our community, here's a snapshot of those impacts:



Impact on Employment

- At least 200 full time job losses because of water recovery which flows right through the community, with less families, fewer children and diminishing services.
- Population decrease in the Shire of 14% means fewer services for everyone.

“A 19% reduction in school aged children matches the 17% drop in education employment”

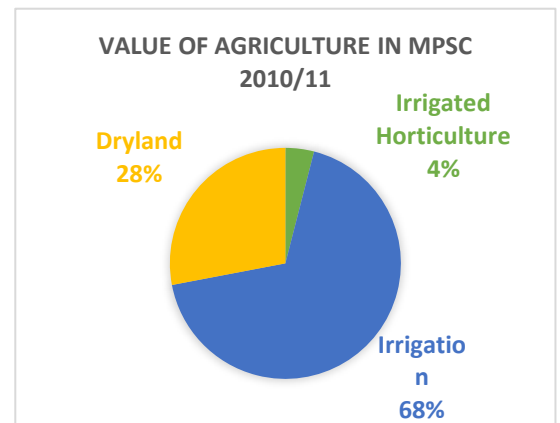
Census data 2001-2011 Moree Plains Shire region

Value of Agricultural Production in MPSC

- MPSC produced approximately 8% of NSW’s Gross Domestic Product valued at \$911 million in 2011.
- This is worth \$2 billion to the community (ABS economic multiplier).

Importance of Irrigation

- In 2011 72% of Agricultural production came for the 10% of irrigated land.
- Buy-backs have reduced the irrigated area by 9% in Moree and 80% in Collarenebri – as a result the region’s production peak is lower and there is less time available to recover between low-water years.



We can't afford for government to put us in a man-made drought while we are still recovering from this one – HAVE YOUR SAY TODAY

Table 1: Summary of census changes 2001 – 2011 moree plains

	2001	2006	2011	Percentage change
Population	15,680	14,124	13,429	-14.35%
Town Population	9,249	8,084	7,722	-16.51%
Number of 'families'	3,906	3,447	3,321	-14.98%
Number of primary school aged children	2,445	2,252	1,978 (1263 registered as attending)	-19.10% (-8.34% on registered no.)
Main employment - agriculture	14.3 % (1,693)	17% with support services 20% (1,217)	15.8% with support services 19.22% (1,113)	-34.25%
Second employment - education	3.8% (450)	5.8% (353)	6.4% (373)	-17.1%



Sources:
 Australia Bureau of Statistic Census information, 2001, 2016, 2011.
 MDBA Catchment Profiles for the Socio-economic analysis to inform the Northern Review.