

SUBMISSION COVERSHEET

CONTACT DETAILS	
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CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY	<p>The Royal Commission will treat all submissions as public documents, unless the author has reached a prior agreement with the Commission that the submission be treated as confidential.</p> <p>Public submissions may be published in full on the Commission's website. Your name, organisation (if applicable), and state or territory will be published with your submission.</p> <p>Has the Commissioner provided agreement for the submission to be treated as confidential? No</p>
SUBMISSION DETAILS	<p>Increased flood heights caused by irrigation water structures on KiaOra(owned by Eastern Australia Agriculture) incorrectly placed on a floodplain, Balonne River St George.</p> <p>In March 2010, twice in January 2011 and again in February 2012 our property located 6 kms downstream from St George was flooded. The flood heights were increased by the earthen structures on the property on the western side of the river adjacent to our land. These structures were approved by the QLD State Government without considering the effects these structures would have on future floods being unable to spread over the floodplains, or the bottleneck effect they would create which would cause floodwaters to be trapped for longer periods of time.</p> <p>In March 2010, the flood peak was recorded as 13.39m which saw every shed, machinery, vehicle and livestock under water. The house was not inundated with the height being half an inch from the floorboards. A number of breaks in the earthen banks were seen in Nearmap images taken at the peak. These breaks allowed the water to escape on to the floodplains.</p> <p>In the first January 2011 flood the peak was recorded as 13.20m. This flood inundated the house by 10cm. Even though this flood was 19cm below the previous flood, the difference was the absence of breaks in the structures on KiaOra, and the raising of a SunWater channel embankment to the east of my property, protecting the channel irrigation area from being inundated. This was done by irrigators without permission from SunWater. The 2nd flood reached a height of 12.49m a couple of weeks later, this did not inundate the house, but once again flooded the entire property and sheds.</p>

	<p>The QLD Government held a Flood Inquiry after this flood to which I was a witness requesting regulations on the placement of levees in QLD as prior to this there weren't any apart from in the Goondiwindi and Emerald Shires.</p> <p>In February 2012 we had the biggest flood on record, reaching 13.95m. Once again my entire property was flooded and the house was inundated by 30cm of water.</p> <p>After the 2010 flood event we brought this problem the attention of all levels of Government including the MDBA. This brought about years of being victimised and bullied, having our work being cut, social life became non existent. We were harassed by police. Unfortunately with the continued decline in our income we were unable to pay a tax debt. We were on a payment plan until April 2015 when the ATO garnished our account in error as we were in the process of raising the house, without assistance from the flood mitigation funds the Balonne Council had been given for private mitigation that others received. My husband had a heart attack in May 2015 due to the stress of this. The ATO then started court proceedings in November 2016. By the time we sold our property in April 2017 at a greatly reduced price, we owed substantially more due to the fees and fines the debt had accrued. We now rent a house in another town...virtually run out of the district.</p> <p>In August 2017 the property KiaOra sold overland flow water to the Government for an amount of around \$38million. In the media statement released, Barnaby Joyce Said this sale would come with flood mitigation benefits to St George as this sale required the removal/modifications to structures.</p> <p>David Littleproud also said in a Queensland Country Life story on this sale that he believed the structures were causing the floodwaters to back up and the removal would give St George flood mitigation benefits and allow flood waters to get away quicker. I have inquired through Local, State (Jim Weller -DNRM Toowoomba) and Federal - Barnaby Joyce and David Littleproud if any hydraulic study or checks have been done to see if the flood mitigation benefits exist or if the water sold will be allowed to run freely across the floodplains back into the river. I've been told no such study or checks had been done as of January this year.</p> <p>We have never been compensated for any flood damages or loss regarding these increased flood heights, while KiaOra has made millions selling this same water...water that is only there during a massive flood.</p> <p>For the last 8 years I have emailed/phoned all levels of Government, attended MDB meetings and made submissions. All replies have been along the lines of passing the buck to another level. With the regulations on levees being brought in In 2014 I was in the hope that this wouldn't happen to anyone else in QLD, but it appears it has as similar flooding has occurred on a property near Toobeah in the Goondiwindi Shire, with similar bullying tactics used on that family.</p> <p>It is extremely disheartening to see EAA make so much money out of a water sale that has been classed as "goanna water" while we have been reduced to near poverty.</p>
<p>DOCUMENTS UPLOADED?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>DECLARATION</p>	<p>I declare that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the submission is made by me or I am authorised to do so by the organisation making the submission • I understand that my submission may be published in full • I understand the Commission may contact me should further information be required. <p>checked</p>

Mr Littleproud understood they were pushing floodwaters back in the direction of St George and the changes would allow water to get away quicker, while still being available for irrigators to pump.

Media release

Strategic water acquisition in Queensland Condamine Balonne

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Barnaby Joyce
Member for Maranoa, David Littleproud

15 August 2018

- The Commonwealth has made a strategic acquisition of more than 28 GL (26 GL LTAAY) in the Queensland Condamine–Balonne.
- This will make a significant contribution towards achieving the remaining local water recovery required for the Condamine–Balonne under the Murray–Darling Basin Plan.
- The decommissioning of structures as part of the sale will also provide important flood mitigation to the town of St George.

The Commonwealth has made a significant step towards achieving the remaining water recovery required under the Murray–Darling Basin Plan in the Condamine–Balonne, with a strategic acquisition of more than 28 GL (26 GL LTAAY) in the region.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Barnaby Joyce, said the strategic acquisition represented 70 per cent of the remaining local water recovery task for the Condamine–Balonne under the 320 GL Northern Basin water recovery target proposed by the Murray–Darling Basin Authority.

“This acquisition was a unique opportunity to secure a significant volume of water in a catchment of particular strategic importance to achieving the triple-bottom line outcomes of the Basin Plan,” Minister Joyce said. “But I know there are communities where the prospect of any further water recovery will be met with concern,” Minister Joyce said.

“We understand that every job is important for rural communities, however, the impacts of this water recovery have been independently assessed to confirm that this purchase of overland flow licences should have a relatively low impact on regional production and casual employment.

“Both I and local Maranoa MP, David Littleproud, have lived in St George, so we know the value of a megalitre of water to the St George and Dirranbandi communities. In this process I would like to recognise David’s efforts to secure the best outcome for the region while protecting as many family farms as possible.

“The company that has sold their water entitlements will continue their mixed-farming business, including irrigation, and so will continue to contribute significantly to the local economy.