

16 JUL 2012

DATE RECEIVED

**Submission to Queensland Competition Authority dated 13/7/2012**

**Re: SEQ Water requesting individual licence holders be charged \$56 per ML for their allocation from the 7,000ML allocated for irrigation below Somerset & Wivenhoe Dams .**

**Attn Angus MacDonald**

**Queensland Competition Authority**

Dear Angus,

I am responding as an individual to the question posed by SEQ Water as to why we should not pay \$56 per ML to them for water to which we have had a right to long before SEQ Water was ever created.

I have considered the material in support of charging irrigators and I have considered the attached material prepared by the Mid Brisbane River Irrigation committee.

I believe it would be unjust and unreasonable to be burdened by any such charge.

I am a land owner and holder of a Water Licence issued under part 4 of the Repealed Act – Water Resources Act 1989, under which I understand SEQ Water must make available under their 345,000 ML allocation free of charge.

I do not intend to agree, either now or in the future, to paying anything for my water allocation that has been part of this property for over 20 years.

I pay a water license fee to the Department of Environment & Resource Management.

I believe it is my right as a land owner and water licence holder to have access to my water allocation without charge. This practice has been in place from as long ago as the 1800s and is inherent to this local area.

I would like to point out that the farmers of this area existed long before the construction of Wivenhoe or Somerset Dams. The 7,000 ML of water allocated to farmers many years ago was done as an entitlement to our farmers of past generations so that they, and now the current land holders, could continue as farmers and providers of food in this local area.

Additionally I would point out that Wivenhoe and Somerset Dams were never built for farming irrigation purposes but for flood mitigation and water supply to the cities downstream. As a farmer I am not asking for use of any stored water. I also do not interfere with any flood mitigation attempts made by SEQ Water and its' associated dams. I am also engaged in keeping the banks of the river in a healthy state with erosion, noxious weeds and the negative effect by destruction of vegetation from fire in mind. I would also point out that the greatest damage done to the river banks adjacent to my land is in fact caused by Wivenhoe Dam releases where the water level is raised for release and then dropped too quickly, apparently to minimize traffic flow disruption downstream in suburbia, causing many cubic

meters of water logged banks to collapse into the river due to the hydraulic effect of water saturated soil.

There is no evidence that SEQ Water has incurred any extra cost as a result of the 7,000 ML allocated to this portion of the river. SEQ Water does not provide any funds for the dedicated machinery or for infrastructure associated with my irrigation operation.

This, in my belief, negates any argument that SEQ Water may have that I should share in the costs associated with their operations of water storage and flood mitigation.

I would appeal to the QLD Competition Authority that fresh produce farming is a marginally viable industry anyway and that the extra cost burden of paying what I see as a water tax would further marginalize the industry reducing our local area to be even further disadvantaged in farming. This I see as detrimental to the food self sufficiency of the area, the state and eventually the country. Importing fresh produce from overseas may fill this gap but at the expense of this country's food self sufficiency and the prosperity of our community.

The charge of \$56 per ML regardless of usage, especially during drought times, when our permitted usage is understandably reduced to as much as 25% ( as occurred toward the end of the yr 2000 to yr 2007 drought) would place even greater pressure on farming viability during the hardship of drought. This burden is grossly unfair and debilitating, especially along side natures occasional penalties.

I would also like to point out that under certain circumstances, such as during the Jan 2011 flood, this area immediately below the dam wall is disadvantaged and is in fact part of the flood mitigation process when the dam is released. This process of captured water release damaged the infrastructure, landscape, machinery, crops, livestock and homes more severely than would have been the case without the dam. It was also responsible for untold human tragedy and in some cases loss of life. This further negates the validity of water charges associated with the running of the dams.

In appreciation of your attention to this matter, I await your reply.

Yours faithfully

Ross Ryder

