

[REDACTED]  
1 message

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To: "water.reform@industry.nsw.gov.au" <water.reform@industry.nsw.gov.au>

Dear [REDACTED],

As you are aware there is an invitation only meeting in the morning at Griffith on 6<sup>th</sup> April and I am not invited. *Thanks to [REDACTED], I have now been invited*

Water reform is a huge political issue in our region and in Broken Hill, Menindee, Wilcannia and other locations along the Darling River. At Easter weekend there was a rally in which the Wilcannia Strategy Group (WSG) was formed.

The scope of the water reform consultation represents only a portion of the huge water problem which now exists in Australia so I will only zero in on them and what I see as associated items. Other items will be left for another day.

Item 1 Water take measurement and metering.

There are sure to be learned presentations on measurement and metering. I want to concentrate on 'water take.'

I have written a brochure 'A Plan to Save the Darling River.' On the front cover the tributaries of the Darling. The tributaries are shown as Attachment 1.

In the 1800s Wilcannia was the third largest port in Australia. It is the contention of the WSG that as farmers along each of the tributaries started their 'take' the overall average flow gradually decreased. If average flows over the past 140 years could be compiled we presume that the total average flows would start to decrease exponentially from about 20 years ago when Cubbie Station first started to move from cattle to growing cotton. Would you believe that I have a neighbour who worked on Cubbie and told me how they were using laser levelling and other earth moving and dam building projects even then. He told how they went into overdrive to complete some projects before Government regulations changed.

Soon others realised what they could get away with and the water takes locations grew in number. Unfortunately these types of actions usually change exponentially.

Fast forward to to-day. The longest river in Australia – the once great Darling River - is almost bone dry. We blame politicians from over the past 117 years. Did they fob off the problem by forming the MDBA just after 15th December 2011 in the name of the environment? Would you believe that we were told that the rivers needed to be saved and now the Darling and the Menindee Lakes are both dry. How much more important is this compared to water metering?

Refer to Attachment 2 and what I call an alphabet soup of bureaucratic organisations and groups.

We have a four part solution.

## 1. Norman Farming

Norman Farming is the perfect(?) example of why Australian agriculture is failing. I had been trying to find an investigative journalist for years. Then along came Four Corners. There it is on You Tube with all of the detail Refer to 'Pumped' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9W6fSIZBZ5M>

This was investigative journalism at its finest and people all over Australia were aware of the combination of opportunistic farming groups and corrupt politicians.

On You Tube refer to: 'Murray-Darling failure: David Littleproud LNP MP for Maranoa is related by marriage to John Newman.'

All of the evidence is there. As they say in films 'Call in the cops.'

On You Tube 'Qld police raid Norman Farming over allegations of Murray Darling Basin funds misuse.'

The Prime Minister was in Broken Hill saying that the process is working. He inferred that water would be flowing soon. But wait. This came from [ABC.NET.AU](http://ABC.NET.AU)

'Basin Authority powerless to act against farmers harvesting floodwaters.'

Will NSW Water completely ignore this on 6<sup>th</sup> April in Griffith?

Will the Productivity Commission completely ignore it when they come to Griffith on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> April?

Norman Farming should be made to punch holes in their illegal road so that we can see clear water (not tainted with blue/green algae) flowing in the Macintyre River.

Another option is that all of those who want this to happen are considering a march to Norman Farming with a camera crew in tow to either punch the holes or try to punch the holes

## 2. Cubbie Station

Some people are just plain lucky. When I am riding my bicycle I like to say Hullo to dogs. I got to know a little dog called Max and his owner. I gave his owner my leaflet for the meeting on Friday. He told me that he worked at Cubbie Station. I told his story earlier but here is another one.

Click on the picture in the link shown below and turn the pages:

<https://issuu.com/kurriman/docs/cubbiestation>

For those who choose not to learn about it that way Attachment 3 shows that Cubbie Station is 14 km across a strategic location which traps more than 21 floodplains and all or part of four rivers.

The extent of earthmoving to reshape the landscape dwarfs that of Norman Farming. It has been trapping water at an increasing rate for at least 20 years.

The first part of the solution involves Scott Morrison. Three years ago he was supposed to start the scaling down of Chinese and Japanese 80% ownership down to 50%. Scott through his known incompetence or from being 'unduly influenced' has let this 'fall under the radar.' My initial reaction in relation to Scott is shown in Attachment 4. I would like to shoot him down in flames.

Another long overdue political action is something which I have asked Malcolm Turnbull, Michael McCormack, Scott Morrison and David Littleproud about in registered, sign for receiving the letter arrangements at \$7.45 each. I asked all to arrive at a fair and transparent assessment for water license details.

The only license I know of is available for all to see by getting to [cubbie.ag](http://cubbie.ag) and selecting water licensing. I got to it via [cubbie.com.au](http://cubbie.com.au).

It shows only 3,768 megalitres.

I got into a real hornet's nest by showing Attachment 5 on Face Book. Someone who I refer to as a political wannabe insisted that the diagram and the information was completely wrong. I almost feel unkind for quoting him. However, he has helped to illustrate the enormous differences in understanding of what people can accept as Cubbie's right to use so much of our precious resource – water. He said : 'The claim that Cubbie Station is licensed to take 460 billion litres of water from the Darling river system every year is false and misleading. It has no such license and never has had. What it has is a high flow only extraction license from the Balonne River of about 69,000 MLs (69 billion litres). This water can only be taken when the Balonne is above a certain height and therefore does not affect the lower Darling. *My comment was 'What a load of rubbish from the wannabe politician.'*

Wikileaks says: The station was created by amalgamating twelve floodplain properties to give Cubbie a total of fifty-one [licences](#). The station's water storage dams stretch for more than 28 kilometres (17 mi) along the [Culgoa River](#), within the [Murray-Darling basin](#). In an average year the station uses 200,000 megalitres (7,100×10<sup>6</sup> cu ft) of water, in a good year as much as 500,000 megalitres (18,000×10<sup>6</sup> cu ft).

To summarise, in the second part of the solution. if politicians questioned come up with an initial 400,000 megalitres as their transparent and fair overall water license, and they are using 500,000 then there should be an immediate release of 100,000 megalitres.

The third part of the solution is to look at what Cubbie have done illegally over many decades of trapping for themselves rivers and floodplains there should be widespread consultation which should result in a fair average flow of water into the Barwon/Darling System.

### 3. Other illegal water takers.

They should be banned immediately and hopefully charged .

### 4. Legal water takers

The transparency portion of this consultation should result in a Government list for each 'take point' with this information. Who is the controlling person or group, flow details on a season or other timing basis and whether there are some who have multiple locations. There should be a critical review of those with multiple take points.

I have been calling for a simulation of what should be the flow from each tributary to achieve full flow through the Darling and the Menindee Lakes System. If three parts to the solution as described have been acted on and multiple users reviewed and the required still falls short, there is a further option. In this case there should be more widespread consultation based on what is best for Australia. Should there be a review of the water lease details?

## Item 2 Transparency Measures

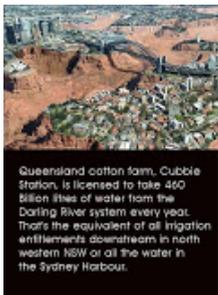
For us the key is 'transparency.' Within the tributaries of the Darling River we are keen to know the volumes allocated for water from each tributary. Separately we would like there to be a simulation of the water attributed to each tributary to provide full flow in the Darling River. Perhaps this could be by Data Cube satellite tracking.

## Item 3 Better Management of Environmental Flows

The Wilcannia Strategy Group is desperate to do whatever is possible to have the Barkanji river people have water in the Darling River for them to have river food including clams and fish. The Menindee Lakes System was part of a huge fish hatchery as shown by Attachment 6. Attachment 7 shows the main weir on the Darling River leading to the lakes.

At the Wilcannia rally at Easter weekend, one of the searching questions was whether it was NSW Water or was it MDBA who sealed up the entrance to the lakes as shown in





**SydneyHarbour01.jpg**  
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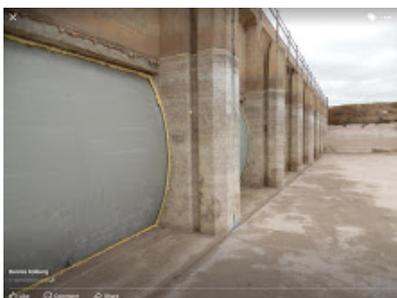
Queensland cotton farm, Cubble Station, is licensed to take 460 billion litres of water from the Darling River system every year. That's the equivalent of all irrigation entitlements downstream in north western NSW or all the water in the Sydney Harbour.



**Menindee05.jpg**  
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**Menindee01.jpg**  
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**MenindeeLakes03.jpg**  
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**FloodplainsHarvesting01.jpg**  
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