

MEDIA RELEASE

## DEATH OF A RIVER

The Darling River is drying. Is the Murray next? The recent fish kills highlighted to the nation the mismanagement of this iconic inland waterway, however, to the people whose lives and livelihoods depend on the Darling the danger signs have been obvious for years. They have raised the alarm and demanded action to no avail. With hands tied and hearts breaking they have watched the disaster unfold, the wilful destruction of the Darling River almost complete. Sadly, those devastating events have only raised more questions.

Why did our federal politicians refuse to give evidence to the South Australian Royal Commission? Where is the action on the Productivity Commission's report into the fish kills? Who owns the Wentworth to Broken pipeline? Where is the business case? Why does it pump over three times the daily needs of Broken Hill? What is the relationship between the pipeline and the two foreign owned mines it passes on its way to Broken Hill? Where did the water from the pipeline come from in such a highly geared market? Where was it transferred from, and can it be considered legal? How will South Australia find the 20% of water it traditionally receives from the Darling? Why are there no regulations on plantings regarding water availability? Why were Tandou/Webster the only company compensated by the Federal Government through a water buy back? Is the water trade market skewed for profiteering? Is the rise of Water Barons applying unneeded pressure on all farmers in our country's food bowl?

The Murray River is subject to the same rules as the Darling. Subject to the same climate. Without answers to these questions, followed by meaningful action, it is inevitable that we will eventually see the reduction of water availability in the Murray. Since development along both sides of the Murray has doubled since the millennium drought broke, the impact of the next drought is likely to be significant. As the next drought looms, we must consider the millennium drought as a case study, learn from it and use that knowledge to prevent similar events in the Murray.

I have posed, and will ask again, these questions of The National Party, Barnaby Joyce and our sitting member Andrew Broad. The people in the Mallee electorate want the truth about water, as our democratically elected representatives they are required to answer!

Instead, Andrew Broad has shown a dereliction of duty while watching his closest neighbour's river being sucked backwards. Not a word, not a single question to the Prime Minister or his National Party power brokers, was raised as rules were changed to harvest any available water from floodplains to the detriment of all rivers in the Murray Darling Basin. Please Mr Broad, Mr Joyce; explain truthfully to the people of rural Australia how on your watch a river has been destroyed, and your apathy has put the Murray in the crosshairs. Ms Webster; explain how you will convince the National Party that the Mallee electorate food bowl irrigators, who are already struggling to pay \$600 a temporary megalitre, will live through the next drought.

Water is for all people in Australia, not just cashed-up corporates, rogue irrigators, water barons and fulltime lobbyists!

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**JASONMODICA.COM.AU**

