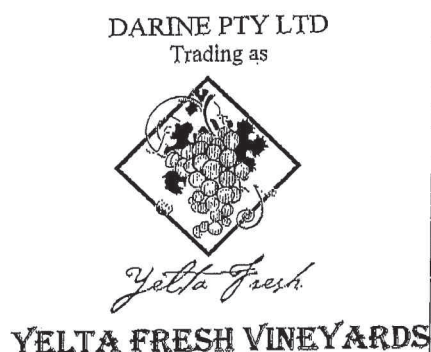


**Submission from Mrs Chistine Argiro
Yelta, VIC**

Submission Number: 75

Public Submission received by Fax to Drought Policy Review 08/08/08:



To Secretariat

Re: Our opportunity to shape drought policy

My name is Christine Argiro and I will be attending the public forum in Mildura on Tuesday 26 August. I will also be registering before the meeting.

Firstly I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be able to voice my concerns. I have already written a letter (3 March 2008) to our Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Tony Burke inviting him to visit Mildura and our vineyard, he declined the invitations he said he had a lot on. So I am looking forward to the meeting on the 26.8.2008

I am the fourth generation here in the Sunraysia area. I am married and with my husband we run 100 acres of table grapes and winery. Our future looked very bright for our four children and ourselves until the drought hit or the mismanagement of the Murray to be more to the point.

We are currently on zero allocation while our neighbors in NSW are on 25% which in the whole picture is still nothing to have a party about. The stress levels of our men is at an all time high - how do you plan for the season or even the week when we do not know if we are going to have a harvest at all? The on going effect on family life is very hard, the security has gone with the unbundling on the water title from land. How do we feed our

family and keep our husbands from slipping down a dangerous slope of depression?
There are only so many times you can tell them that everything will work out!


I feel the government has a lot to answer for. They have NOT caused the drought but their actions have not been to the benefit of the primary producer. The Murray/Darling basin grows 41% of the food bowl and generates 28 billion dollars for the economy and this equates to 2.9% of the GDP. We know that the government has made mistakes by allowing M.I.S schemes to develop, allowing "sleeping licenses" to be woken up and used, unbundling of water from land, no infrastructure or dams have been built since the Snowy scheme and allowing more people to come onto an already stressed river system.

There are things that the government could do today that would at least start in the right direction. Do they really think that by taking a pipeline to Melbourne to keep it drought free is going to work when they are talking about taking water from an already stressed river system. Would it be possible that a pipeline from Tasmania to Victoria which could help put some water back into the system? The natural gravitation would be able to feed the pipeline and Melbourne could be drought free. There was once talk also of a pipeline coming from Queensland. Cloud seeding has been done all over the world and yet it has not been tried over the Murray/Darling catchment. Are there no other options than to take the easy one, which is to reduce grower's allocation?

They tell us on TV to be water wise and to use water wisely. If Minister Burke had come to visit our property I would have shown him how we have changed over the years to save water. We have gone from flood irrigation, to overhead spray and now to drip irrigation. We have also installed enviro scans on our property so there really is no water waste. There is nothing left for us to do - we have tried to save water as much as we can. How come I have a water license that I can not use my full entitlement and that the government can tell me how much and when I can use it! Or do I take the option and buy back water that I already own.

As a grower I don't feel we have much time left. This is the time for the government to do something in a positive way for the man on the land. Australia has grown and supplied the world with "A" grade fruit something that we can be proud of. I feel that we need to be heard and our plight understood at what we have to lose. It is not only our homes and properties but the life that our great grandparents worked so hard for. This can not be the end of the line for us!

Regards


Christine Argiro