



PO BOX 93  
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[www.griffithbusinesschamber.com.au](http://www.griffithbusinesschamber.com.au)

16 March 2020

Dear Minister Melinda Pavey

**RE: Murrumbidgee Industry & Agriculture MIA Communities and the Murrumbidgee WSP.**

Murrumbidgee Industry & Agriculture Communities (MIA Communities) is an arm of the Griffith Business Chamber and has recently expanded. We focus primarily on our wider community, the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. We have a broad cross section of members with intimate knowledge of our area and industries, working together to bring the best outcomes for our unique, productive and vibrant region.

As you would be aware, towns in the MIA like Griffith and Leeton are completely reliant on irrigation water for their sustainability. Even small changes to legislation and regulations in our valley can have huge consequences for our communities. Many value add, vertically integrated, paddock to plate and fibre industries such as Sunrice, wineries, chicken processing facilities, feedlots, abattoirs, fruit and vegetable processing and packing facilities, Cotton gins, fish farms and, of course, all the thousands of people they collectively directly or indirectly employ are totally reliant on our area's ability to access water.

We would like to congratulate you for the recent announcements regarding the Murrumbidgee Water Sharing Plans (WSP) which, under enormous pressure, you prevented from being sent to the MDBA. We really are very grateful that you understand the gravity of this situation. We believe that public consultation with the broader community is going to achieve the best results and identify issues regarding changes to existing legislation or regulations that are in our Murrumbidgee Valley WSP. Many of our members have been in previous contact with yourself, your predecessors and your departments regarding the consultation process and have taken the time to write submissions.

Along with other organisations that many of us are also members of, we have grave concerns about the developing outrage of people in our community who have either seen or heard about the latest two iterations of our WSP and WRP. We have heard numerous times from several sources that "they've come back worse".

We have been informed that your department will be coming to Griffith on the 19<sup>th</sup> May to discuss the proposed amendments to the draft Murrumbidgee Valley WSP with the Stakeholder Advisory Panel (SAP) and we would request to meet with your department and work through the newly proposed draft and amendments. We would also, urgently, request a publicly available copy of the amended draft, as it is not available on the website as your media release suggests.

Our wider Murrumbidgee Community and many of our MIAC members have been working for years to inform NSW departments of practical and constructive solutions to help deliver genuine triple bottom line outcomes via WSPs.

We recommend that consultation with just the Stakeholder Advisory Panels (SAPs) will not be enough. Your department officials need to talk to other well informed and experienced stakeholders in our valley and not be subjected to unrealistic timeframes because the process has been less than perfect to date.

Kind Regards

Darren DeBortoli  
**Committee Member of MIA Communities**