

# Running the River, 4 Corners October 1993

## Topic: Water management in Australia

### Background

Competition over water use within the Murray Darling Basin (MDB)

Over last 30 years the flow of the river has slowed by 2/3.

It is time to reassess management of the river.

Construction of dams and weirs has regulated the flow to allow for allocation of water when needed by users namely agriculture industry.

Agriculture provides \$10 billion in income to the economy in 1993

Fragile system

Consequence of over use along the waterways has resulted in outbreaks of blue green algae

### Example of a user: Cubbie Station

Location:

What do they grow?

How do they grow it?

What are the consequences of putting a weir on the Colgower River?

What does 'Rafferty's rules' mean?

Explain the statement 'local interests beat the regional interests of the basin'

### Example of a user: Macquarie Marshes, wetland

Location:

What are some of its geographic characteristics?

What convention declared the Macquarie Marshes as a vital wetland site?

Describe the change over time in attitudes towards developing the Macquarie River?

What is beneficial flooding?

Why are wetlands and specifically the Macquarie Marshes considered to be the kidneys of the MDB?

Comment on the following statement made by the cotton grower Findley.

*'What sort of bird life do we want to support? No use trying supporting 2 million birds when maybe 20,000 is all you need.'*

## Total catchment management

Collie in northern NSW saw people of the basin come together and discuss the issue.

Name them.

1. C
2. S C
3. C G
4. B W U A
5. NSW D W R
6. D U

What is the essence of this change in thinking?

What are water licences?

How valuable are they?

What went wrong with the licensing system?

## Factors

There are a number of factors that have impacted on graziers down stream. List them.

## Urban areas in the MDB and their impact

The source of the Darling is the Condamine in the GDR, Queensland. To the east of the source water has not been a hot issue because there has been no scarcity until most recently, to the west the picture has always been vastly different with the issue of water use and water quality an ongoing and often heated issue.

What is a major environmental issue affecting water quality around MDB towns and cities such as Toowoomba?

**Research activity:** Toowoomba Mayor has brought in some major changes to use and management of water in Toowoomba most recently. Investigate

List the people/groups who have some management of the river.

1. M D B
2. NSW D W R
3. E
4. V R W C
5. B R C
6. N P W S

## What will save the river?

*Look downstream rather than looking out for yourself or else no one will get anything everyone will lose. Explain*