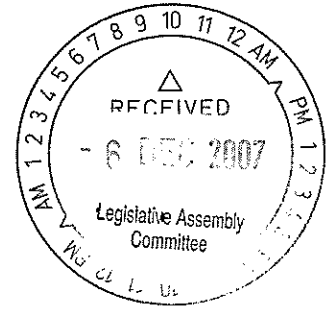


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Submission to Parliamentary Enquiry into Water Licensing and Services

Surface water resources can be divided into 3 classifications.

1. Surface and/or spring water where the water originates on the property and infrastructure is supplied by the owner.

While there is currently no requirement to licence this class of water resource changes are planned to include it. Property owners in high rainfall areas have paid a large premium to obtain land that included the water asset and then made additional substantial investments in infrastructure to harvest water. Any additional cost would be grossly unfair in these circumstances and would amount to being charged for the rain that falls on private property. A water allowance calculated using area and rainfall could be a consideration.

2. Stream flows where the water originates from outside the property and infrastructure is supplied by the property owner.

In this instance the water should be regarded as public property and licensing would be appropriate, however the cost should be kept to a minimum in recognition of the investment made to harvest the water and the contribution to the economy resulting from the activities undertaken with the water.

3. Water supplied from irrigation schemes supported by govt infrastructure.

This is the class most able to afford higher charges, as there has been very limited infrastructure cost to the property owner.

I understand that the cost recovery referred to is limited to the cost of licensing but it is unfair that the sector with the highest investment and lowest affordability should be paying most while the sector with the highest govt investment pays least.

Possibly some scheme could be devised whereby licence charges are maintained and an investment allowance is paid to self-supply farmers. This should satisfy the cost recovery requirements of the NWI while in effect reducing the cost to those who have made substantial investment in infrastructure.

Very few farmers I have spoken to are against water control in principle and most will support a system that is fair and recognises private investment at a reasonable cost.