

Submission on behalf of Lower Boyne Rivers Irrigators

When you are deliberating about a new price path for Sunwater Schemes, we would like you to note the unreliability of our water supply from Boondooma Dam. This is mainly due to the 70,000 meg cut off rule to protect Tarong Energy.

Please note the following points due to the protection of Tarong Energy.

1. Over the last 10 years the irrigators were without water from Boondooma Dam for 3 years. Tarong Energy has 29,000 megs of High Priority water in the Dam as well as having access to recycled water from the water grid.
2. With the uncertainty of water supply it is very difficult to make long term business decisions.
3. Irrigators on the Boyne have had to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars building off stream storages to try and offset the unreliability of the water supply from Boondooma Dam.
4. The unreliability of the water has meant the selling up of at least 4 major orchards on the river.
5. To convert Medium priority water to High priority water there is a conversion figure of 2.5 to 1 to be used. The then, DNR (Department of Environment and Resource Management) & Sunwater had numerous meetings to settle on 2.5 to 1 because this had to reflect the unreliability of the water supply. Even though there is a conversion figure at the Dam, the Lower Boyne irrigators cannot convert their water to High priority because of the unreliability of supply.
6. We believe the 70,000 meg cut off rule should be abolished now that Tarong Energy has access to recycled water.
7. With regard to Sunwater wanting a Return on Assets, the irrigators are of the belief that Tarong Energy contributes 75% of the cost of Boondooma Dam, so we would like to be informed what assets Sunwater is expecting a return on.
8. At a previous Sunwater Price Path Meeting, we brought to the attention of Sunwater that our water supply from the Boondooma Dam is gravity fed and that they were charging us for pumping costs which we were not using. Please bear this in mind again with this price path.
9. Electricity prices have recently been significantly increased and if the price of water is increased we fear for the future of irrigation businesses on the Boyne River.

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