



1st October 2018

Great Artesian Basin Secretariat **gabsecretariat@agriculture.gov.au**
Water Division
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
GPO BOX 858
Canberra ACT 2601

We have been cattle producers in the Coonamble region and our family has been here for more than a century. We are solely reliant on the Great Artesian Basin for our water supply.

We write this submission to as we consider the management of the GAB to be critically important now and for all future generations who will follow us living and relying on this critical resource.

My concerns with current GAB use include and are not limited to:

- * Maintenance of bores and infrastructure should be a priority for the future of the GAB - funding needs to be made available to maintain those already done so they continue to improve water take and wastage.
- * The stress to the GAB from increased mining approvals - particularly around or on recharge zones of the GAB. Why are we considering allowing further take from the GAB when the draft mentions in several places that the resource is both finite and in some cases already stressed. Mining anywhere near the GAB should not be allowed in my opinion.
- * Regulations and compliance on water take and use are not regulated under one body - each state has their own governance - I feel it would be much simpler, more transparent and better for the management of the GAB if one body independently elected could monitor and regulate the GAB moving into the future. Not self-regulated, one rule for all users, and transparent for the general public as well as industry and government.

* I believe we should adopt and adhere to the Precautionary Principle regarding the further use of the GAB into the future - if an industry cannot prove they will not adversely damage or destroy the GAB then it must simply not be allowed to proceed - protection of the GAB must be the top priority of any management strategy - we cannot sustain continued agriculture (food production as a priority) nor life without the GAB - it must be protected at all costs.

We hope to see the consultation as proving to be effective, with suggestions adopted from submissions along with continued transparency in the management of the GAB - a natural resource we simply cannot afford to place under stress, nor contaminate in any way. As a business reliant on the GAB as our sole source of freshwater we urge you to carefully consider the impacts from increased mining approvals on and around the GAB - we simply cannot "make good" irreversible damage and for my family. We cannot sustain life in this area without it.

Yours faithfully

Dugald & Justine Bucknell