

FIGHT BACK AGAINST THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOLAR INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES IN THE M.I.A.

In 1912 following the construction of the Burrinjuck dam the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area was established at great cost to a fledgling nation and the state of N.S.W. It was Australia's original food bowl. It was designed to provide reliable produce to the nation even in times of drought. It is now the nation's fourth largest irrigation area of approximately 600,000 hectares. Today it is one of the most diverse and productive regions in Australia producing food and fibre and contributing \$5 billion annually to the economy. It is still regarded as a major engineering achievement. The main towns in the area are Leeton and Griffith which were purpose built and are unusual as up until now, they have been growing, whereas sadly most rural towns are shrinking.

Developed at great expense to both the fledgling Federal Government and the N.S.W. State governments, mainly by soldier settlers returning from the First World War, many with injuries both physical and mental the project slowly grew. Some were not successful mainly because the blocks were too small, they had little agricultural training and for other reasons but mainly those who were able to persevere were successful.

Because of the above in my opinion the whole of the M.I.A. should be regarded, even unofficially, as a war memorial. Between the wars people came from many nations as well as Australian citizens from all over Australia as the area grew in importance. After the Second world War there was a large influx of Italian migrants eager to join their countrymen and women already here. These migrants gave the area the Mediterranean flavour that it has become noted for.

Only a small quantity of Australia's land is arable (4.1%) in 2022 compared to Afghanistan 12%, China 11.5% and U.S.A. 16.6%. The world average of 189 countries is 14.5% and historically from 1961 to 2022 the figure for Australia is 2.8%. Of this arable land only 5% of it is under irrigation. That means that there is in Australia only a very small 0.002% of land under irrigation. This irrigation land produces 30% of Australia's agricultural production. Now The M.I.A. food bowl is threatened with a lessening of this valuable asset because of the introduction of so called Solar Renewables which are in fact Solar Industrial Complexes (S.I.C.'s). The misnomer of calling these developments farms and if they are larger areas parks, would be laughable if it were not so ~~disastrous~~. *misleading.*

If, as some believe the recent flooding in northern N.S.W and drought in South Australia and western Victoria and even The Riverina which has caused significant Primary Production losses is caused by Climate change then it would seem to me that the productive M.I.A.

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should be preserved at all cost. Instead of making life difficult for primary producers it should prevent any action such as the installation of S.I.C.'s on extremely valuable productive land.

The other point to be raised is our present and future immigration intake as well as our nation's natural growth rate and what agricultural production will be required to meet the food demand firstly for Australia and for overseas countries dependent on us. It is estimated that our population growth will be from 26 million in 2022 to 32.8 by 2050 and 42.9 million by the end of the century. The time the S.I.Cs. are operational and what damage they cause to the soil environment will determine what land is available for irrigation production in the future.

A difficult situation is being faced by irrigators at this time, with higher costs for fertilisers, fuel, ever increasing electricity prices despite heavily subsidised government payments to power suppliers and developers to mention a few. Add to this the threat of the Murray Darling Basin Authority's Water Buy Back Scheme sanctioned under the authority of the present Federal Government, and it would appear that Governments are working seriously against the survival of the M.I.A. and its major centres of Naranderra, Leeton and Griffith.

Already the wonderful image of the M.I.A. is changing as the S.I.C.s are being installed with valuable food producing land being made unproductive with unsightly poles and wires appearing. Griffith and Leeton have a thriving tourist trade from people who wish to see the various crops growing which give the area a strong continental flavour. They are not coming to view S.I.C.'s such as are sadly occurring in places like Broken Hill, Goulburn, Coleambally, and Wagga Wagga, to name a few that I have witnessed. It would be a tragedy if The M.I.A. was to meet the same fate. This is particularly so when all the S.I.C.'s and batteries throughout Australia at best provide only 30% efficiency power production.

The M.I.A. has been a very unified community with close settlement. The subsidised tax payer money being provided for those who are content in receiving a price to have S.I.C.'s installed is causing grief for those who are not the chosen ones or refuse to have these installations on their properties for environmental and other reasons.

In my opinion the money wasted on non reliable renewables would be better spent on the immediate things facing Australia such as increasing our defence spending against a belligerent China that continues to be one of the worlds greatest polluters. I won't go into the matter of the slave labour being used to provide the Solar components coming into this country from China.

I would add that anyone who would permit a S.I.C. on arable land in Australia and in particular in irrigation areas has no sense of responsibility. In fact I believe it is bordering on sacrilege. I am asking the Government to stop this madness as a matter of great urgency.

Sadly may I say that I know that what I have relayed will not make the slightest difference to the governments tsunami of S.I.C. installations but I believe saving Australia is more important than governments trying to save face on their madcap non-reliable renewable energy scheme.

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