

Basin destruction: McBride

LARGE-SCALE Far West NSW landholder Robert McBride has taken to YouTube to vent his frustration at what he calls “incompetence” in the management of the Menindee Lakes and Lower Darling River.

He is also calling for NSW Water Minister Niall Blair’s resignation because he is “refusing to listen to community concerns, and provide a commitment to Menindee Lakes and Lower Darling communities and businesses”.

“I have spent the best part of 50 years on the Darling River,” he said.

“In the past 20 years, NSW Water has shown incompetence in managing the Menindee Lakes and Lower Darling, leaving these communities high and dry.

“A \$500,000,000 tax-payer funded pipeline soon to be built from Wentworth to Broken Hill suggests that NSW Water has no long-term commitment to maintain water in the lakes (as Broken Hill will no longer be dependent on this water).

“This tolls a death knell for the environment and the communities along Menindee Lakes and the Lower Darling.”



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKImDgR0KsQ>

The McBride family owns Tolarno, Peppora and Wyoming Stations in the western division of NSW.

Mr McBride believes the pipeline will enable NSW Water to decommission the Menindee Lakes, and the Lower Darling will only receive intermittent flows.

“Since European settlement, it has only been in the past 10 years that on three occasions there has not been a permanent water supply for communities along the Lower Darling,” he said.

“In 2015-16, the Lower Darling was dry for a period of eight months. The situation in 2015-16 was worse than any experienced during the 2000s drought.



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“Too much water is being extracted by big irrigators in Qld and northern NSW to supply environmentally unsustainable crops and industries.

“Short-sighted politicians are kow-towing to these big irrigators and allowing short-term economic gains of few to be prioritised over those communities and businesses downstream and the long-term environmental sustainability of the Murray-Darling Basin – the 7th largest river system in the world.”

Mr McBride says local landholders are lobbying politicians to stand up for the river and the environment.

“We see firsthand the environmental disaster already unfolding,” he said.

“We need the wider Australian public to understand the destruction occurring to our River system and the Murray Darling Basin right now.

“We are facing the worst environmental disaster in Australian history, which must be avoided at all costs.”

The NSW government and the MDB Authority have been contacted for comment.

<http://www.stockjournal.com.au/story/4523078/basin-destruction-mcbride/>