

# MEDIA RELEASE



For Immediate Release – 13 October 2010

## WE CAN FEED OURSELVES EVEN IF THE TAP GETS TURNED OFF

**Canberra could establish its own food production industry with a ring of hydroponic, aquaponic and other intensive food enterprises around the perimeter of the city and become a world leader in adopting a food security policy to combat the threat from climate change.**

This proposal is the essence of a paper to be put to the ACT Government as a positive response to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority draft plan released last week. Under the plan the ACT might lose up to 36% of its water entitlement. The paper recommends an expert ACT Government Food Security Task Force to examine the prima-facie case it makes out for extensive hydroponic, aquaculture, aquaponic and poultry enterprises employing hundreds of workers and producing millions of dollars worth of vegetables, fish, poultry and other food for local consumption.

The paper has been prepared by Fusion Australia, a Christian youth and community organisation. Starting in Sydney in 1960, Fusion is now an international movement in 15 countries worldwide. In Canberra, Fusion ran for 18 years the successful hands-on horticulture and aquaponics project at Lions Youthhaven Kambah for disadvantaged people and refugees from rural backgrounds. Limited bore water supplies forced an end to the project at the end of 2009.

The local Fusion team then developed the vision of decentralised and localised food production with low water technologies close to the points of consumption.

One focus of the vision is aquaponics, a new and little known technology using only 10% of the water required in open fields to produce fish and vegetables in both domestic and commercial operations. The strategy could be applied world-wide in areas of low or variable rainfall, in both remote and heavily populated areas, with limited capital and technical know-how.

An ACT Environment Grant of \$15,000 in 2007 funded a successful Fusion trial of aquaponics in a cold climate.

The Fusion paper also suggests that under pressure from high food prices and scarcity it would be feasible for 15,000 backyards in Canberra to grow over \$20 million worth of vegetables, fruit, eggs, and fish a year.

Brenton Reimann, Coordinator for Fusion in Canberra expects the paper to be submitted to the Government shortly and to be available upon request.