

## **IRRIGATORS CALL FOR BASIN MINISTERS TO MEET ON PLAN FUTURE (14/02/2018)**

NSW Irrigators Council (NSWIC) has called on the Murray Darling Basin States and the Commonwealth to meet to discuss the future of the Basin Plan as soon as possible after the South Australian Election on March 17 – following today's disallowance by the Senate of the Northern Basin Plan amendments recommended by the Murray Darling Basin Authority. NSWIC strongly supports the decision by the NSW and Victorian Governments to walk away from the Basin Plan if any of the current Plan amendments before Parliament are voted down.

NSWIC CEO, Mark McKenzie, said the Disallowance Motion was primarily driven by the Greens wilful ignorance and vandalism of the Basin Plan, and by political manipulation by Federal Labor and the SA Government ahead of the SA State Election. He said there needed to be some clear air after the SA poll when cooler heads might prevail, and the Basin Governments have a final opportunity to reaffirm or withdraw their support for the Plan in its current form.

“Getting the Plan to this point has been a painstaking and costly exercise for Governments, irrigators and Basin communities over the last decade. The support for the Basin Plan is fragile and will now evaporate as communities feel betrayed by the politicians they struggled to believe in the first place. Federal Labor and the SA Government going back on their previous commitments to support the current Plan settings – including adaptive changes – and their attempt to rewrite it after all Governments had agreed and signed off, is to be loudly condemned as an example of destructive, short-sighted and parochial politics.”

“NSWIC applauds the NSW and Victorian Governments’ hard line that if the Northern Basin Review amendments and the Sustainable Diversion Limit offsets of 605 billion litres in environmental water saving works and measures are voted out of the Plan – the Plan is dead and there is no option but for NSW and Victoria to walk away,” Mr McKenzie said.

“South Australia must also know that such an implosion of the Basin Plan hurts them the most because they will end up with less, not more, water. NSW irrigators and their communities would prefer that the Plan implodes and NSW and Victoria walk away before we would stand idly by as Labor, the Greens and NXT politicians try to blackmail our Government into allowing additional water to be extracted from primary production that will only hurt our regional economies and our people!”

Mr McKenzie said a post-SA Election Basin Ministers Meeting to decide the future of the Basin Plan would be a last ditch effort to get the Plan back on track, or condemn it to failure. ENDS.

For further information:

Mark McKenzie – CEO NSW Irrigators’ Council  
0412 075 245

Approved RS / TN