

A FAIR GO AND A CERTAIN FUTURE FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (13/12/2018)

Friday's Murray Darling Basin Minister's meeting in Melbourne is an opportunity for the Ministers to think about rural communities in the Basin. The New South Wales Irrigators' Council has been consistent and clear about the need for a strong socio-economic assessment to be applied to the prospective recovery of an extra 450 GL of 'up water'.

The Melbourne meeting represents the chance for Federal and State Ministers to say that the Murray Darling Basin Plan respects rural communities, and that water policy doesn't suck the life blood out of rural communities in the Basin.

The New South Wales Irrigators' Council supports not only a strong Socio-Economic Outcomes Assessment for the 450 GL Up Water, but for that Assessment to apply to all water reform projects and plans. Decisions that are made without regard to the consequences is reckless decision making and undermines a certain future for rural communities.

Not only should Basin Ministers endorse Socio-Economic Outcomes Assessments for all water initiatives, these projects and plans should include a Rural Communities Impact Statement (RCIS) that can be published prior to public consultations. The RCIS gives the officials, elected representatives and the effected communities confidence that the impacts on rural communities are understood.

An RCIS will ensure that water recovery doesn't undermine rural communities and ensures that the impacts are well known and publicly acknowledged. This is the path to ensuring rural communities are respected, and the pathway to a Fair Go and a Certain Future. END

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Approved JC / TN