

MEDIA RELEASE

Open Letter From Scientists on the Murray-Darling Basin Confirms Calls From Industry

19/07/2019

NSWIC is pleased to see the support of acclaimed scientists who have supported the calls from Industry this week.

CEO of the NSW Irrigators' Council Luke Simpkins said, "The scientists have confirmed what our industry has been emphasising - through the Basin Plan, our farmers are contributing water to achieve positive outcomes for the environment – in fact, *'it is the largest re-direction of water to the environment that has ever been made in any large river basin the world'*¹."

"This is a valuable and unique collaboration, and (as the scientists highlighted) is a world leading policy, miles in front of transboundary water basins globally."

"The Basin Plan is not perfect, and there remains lots of work to do, but we must be constructive and not sensationalist in our approach."

"There is a growing divide between our scientific community and agricultural community on the one hand, and then the ideas portrayed through the media on the other, which is inappropriately risking public support of both industry and the Basin Plan."

"These scientists are experts in *hydrologic analysis, riverine ecology, irrigation engineering, water quality, climate change and socioeconomics* – we must listen to them."

NSWIC particularly wishes to highlight the below key points from the Open Letter:

- *"the emergence of new irrigation developments in the Basin does not mean that irrigators are extracting more water than they did before the Plan"*
- *"assertions that water efficiency projects funded by the Federal Government are yielding little or no water savings are not supported by available evidence. Though*

¹ <https://theaustralianatnewscorpau.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/mdb-open-letter-final.pdf>

considerably more expensive than water buybacks, these infrastructure investments are generating substantial water savings, whilst enhancing agricultural productivity.

- *“Suggestions that the Basin Plan is of no environmental benefit are false. Water entitlements yielding an average of 2000 GL/year have been acquired for the environment by the Commonwealth. This is a substantial transfer of water from the consumptive pool back to the environment.*

For further information:

Luke Simpkins – CEO NSW Irrigators’ Council

0410 976 919

Approved JC/TN