

## **CARP VIRUS SHOULD REDUCE NEED FOR MORE WATER RECOVERY IN BASIN (3 May 2016)**

NSW Irrigators Council (NSWIC) has warmly welcomed the Federal Government's decision to release the Carp Herpes Virus into the waterways of the Murray Darling Basin as a much needed broadening of the focus on achieving the environmental objectives of the Murray Darling Basin Plan by including non-water flow related projects.

The release of the virus will deliver the first of a range of non-flow related environmental measures that do not solely rely on delivering large volumes of water to meet Plan targets. The sharp reduction in destructive carp numbers will lay the foundation for a significant rebound of native fish populations, and will also significantly improve water quality and reduce damage to waterways and wetlands - meeting a number of the principle environmental objectives of the Basin Plan.

NSWIC CEO Mark McKenzie described the decision to release of the carp virus as a "game changer" in implementation of the Basin Plan.

"The release of the carp virus will be a massive step forward - because it can achieve key environmental targets in the Plan without relying solely on releasing more and more water into rivers and wetlands. In many cases this has created a better breeding environment for the carp at the expense of native fish! The Basin States and the Federal Government should approve the carp virus release as a very sizeable offset against the remaining volume of water to be recovered by the Commonwealth under the Basin Plan. We believe an offset of at least 200 gegalitres of water should be factored into the remaining Commonwealth water recovery target, because eliminating carp will deliver such a huge environmental dividend across the Basin."

"Last month's agreement of the Ministerial Council to consider offsets from projects such as the carp virus release and reducing cold water pollution affecting fish breeding, means the Plan does not need to rely on tax payers continually having to wear the burden of buying more water for the environment. The release of the virus is a first step in being more flexible about how we can achieve the environmental outcomes detailed in the Plan without doing further damage to regional economies by reducing the water available for irrigated agriculture. This is about focussing on the outcomes we are seeking - not just on greater volumes of water - because more water will never deliver the benefits of eliminating the carp," Mr McKenzie said.

**ENDS**

**Approved: RS / TG**

**For Further Information**

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