

Irrigators call out Wentworth Group on Basin Plan (24/10/2017)

NSW Irrigators Council (NSWIC) has returned fire on the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists over its continuing criticism this week of progress with the Murray Darling Basin Plan, after the Group once again accused the NSW and Victorian Governments of undermining the Plan.

NSWIC CEO, Mark McKenzie, said the Wentworth Group's credibility was greatly diminished by its latest strident attack on the NSW and Victorian Governments and on irrigators, landholders and a major irrigation corporation for allegedly impeding the delivery of flood flows through the Southern Basin. NSWIC says the Plan has not progressed to the point where the Governments are in a position to sign off yet on measures designed to allow for greater flows through the system to water environmental sites throughout the Basin as well as deliver more water to the Lower Lakes, Coorong and Murray Mouth in South Australia – without fully assessing the potentially huge third party impacts on regional communities and landholders throughout the Murray system in NSW and Victoria.

“The Wentworth Group has once again shown that it is not a body that deserves respect. It is acting like just another environmental activist group pushing propaganda through the media, rather than a group of scientists using analysis of the evidence to constructively lobby Governments for better environmental outcomes,” Mr McKenzie said.

“We suggest that the Group's members re-read the Plan and particularly the deadlines in the Plan, that show we are still only part way to implementing all the components that will deliver more water for the environment through the system. It is totally unreasonable to expect all the work to allow flood level volumes to flow through the system should be in place now – rather than between 2019 and 2024 as detailed in the Plan. What the Wentworth Group has stated this week shows no regard whatsoever about the impacts of flooding on Basin communities - but instead they just want to let rip with flood water so that more water reaches the end of the system in SA!”

Mr McKenzie said NSWIC continued to support the implementation of a 'balanced' Plan that leads to an appropriate balance between the environmental, social and economic outcomes within the Basin, and strongly supports the NSW and Victorian Governments' commitment to not seeing any further negative impacts on communities and landholders in the Basin from the recovery and deployment of environmental water.

“Sadly, it appears that the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists are very concerned about creating floods in the Basin, but have no concern whatever about the impact of man-made floods on the people living on or near its rivers,” Mr McKenzie said. ENDS.

Further Information:

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