

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA MUST STOP PLAYING POLITICS  
WITH THE FUTURE OF BASIN COMMUNITIES  
(19/12/2017)**

The NSW Irrigators' Council call on the South Australian State Government to stop playing petty domestic politics with the future of Basin communities.

Council Chairman Richard Stott said "it is disgraceful that South Australia is selfishly prioritising next year's South Australian election over a successful Basin Plan implementation process. We cannot allow South Australia to hold the rest of the basin to ransom in an attempt to gain votes in South Australia."

Councils' Vice Chair Tim Napier continued "We had hoped that this last Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council meeting in 2017 see an outbreak of common sense and positive progress made for all the basin states. Instead we see the meeting end with the same parochial political posturing that got us into this mess to begin with. It is time for these petty games to end and for the South Australian government to act in the interest of the basin as a whole, including their own river communities."

"After extensive consultation over the last four years on the Northern Basin Review and the independent assessment by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority that led to the proposed Basin Plan amendments in 2017, South Australian Water Minister, Ian Hunter simply dismisses the process and the science despite overwhelming evidence that the amendments would lead to a more balanced plan."

Richard Stott said, "It is quite evident, Minister Hunter only chooses to consider the science when it suits his own election purpose."

"We are at a critical juncture of the Basin Plan implementation and we cannot afford to have state politics derail years of water reform that has caused significant economic and social pain in our Basin communities."

"If we miss the opportunity to pass the 605 SDL adjustment measures, further pain and hardship will be incurred by rural communities and industries in the Murray-Darling Basin through additional water recoveries in NSW, Victoria and South Australia."

"We only have one chance to move forward with the SDL adjustment mechanism and we need all Basin Ministers to come back to the table and work constructively for the future of all Basin communities."

NSW Minister Niall Blair and the other state ministers are to be commended for their mature and constructive approach to implementing the plan that no one wanted. It is disappointing that Minister Hunter chooses to act in such a fashion and puts the entire plan at risk."

For further information:  
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Approved RS / TN