

MEDIA RELEASE

NSWIC Thanks Minister Pavey for Standing Up for Dry Communities in NSW

17 December 2019

CEO of the NSWIC, Luke Simpkins, said “MinCo today was a great success for NSW. NSW irrigation farmers cannot do more and the NSWIC supports her fight for NSW today”.

“We have been calling for a Better Plan that is flexible and responsive to the new and serious conditions that NSW is facing as rural communities, as farmers, and as a state that enjoys locally grown produce. Minister Pavey has made this clear today.”

NSWIC fully agrees that NSW simply does not have the water to hand over an additional 450GL of water. Even if we had that much water to offer, it simply could not be done without further damaging our communities that are crippled by drought and running without water.

We were pleased to hear Minister Pavey’s intention to reassess the commitment to the 605GL SDL Projects, provided that communities are protected. Whilst the SDL Adjustment Mechanism was designed to prevent further damage to communities (and the concept of the SDLAM is very much supported) we have major concerns about the actual projects, the processes under which they were developed, and the risks if they are undelivered. NSWIC sent a letter to Minister Pavey on 24 July recommending that flexibility was needed for new or improved projects, given community opposition to a number of projects. We are pleased to see that Minister Pavey will reassess how the SDLAM is being delivered, and we hope this assessment will prevent further harm to communities and our farmers.

NSWIC met with Minister Pavey on 23 October and informed her that the consultation process for WRPs had been ineffective, and our communities felt unheard. We are pleased that the Minister have taken this matter seriously, so our farmers are not left out of decision-making that affects their livelihoods.

Luke Simpkins, CEO of the NSWIC said, “Perhaps it is time that the next MinCo takes place in rural Australia, so that the Ministers can look out the window and see the social and economic impacts of water policy and the drought. I suggest that MinCo next convene on the Murray River in NSW, where the Ministers can see dust clouds across barren farms and a full river, all in the one place.”

The NSWIC looks forward to the work of the Inspector-General and we will continue to work with his team in the interests of irrigation farmers in NSW. NSWIC is pleased that Minister Pavey supported the Inspector-Generals work, and is pleased that Minister Littleproud is continuing with the review despite not all Basin States being willing to give our farmers a fair go.

For further information:
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