

---

## MEDIA RELEASE

---

# NSWIC Calls for Clear Plans for Drought Recovery

**18/20/2020**

Following several weeks of promising rainfalls in parts of NSW, the first time in three years, NSW has suspended the water sharing arrangements in some systems.

The NSW Irrigators' Council today said "recent drought conditions have been unprecedented, and we agree that during these exceptional circumstances, drastic measures such as embargoes have been required to ensure higher priority needs can be met in the short term. These measures represent the most comprehensive protection of inflows ever applied.

However, suspending a water sharing plan is never the long-term solution. After over 12 days of intense rainfall and flood conditions in many areas, Government is yet to identify the target for when established water sharing arrangements will resume."

"All we are asking for is a flow target for this event that would give downstream communities certainty that water is on its way to serve their needs, including the needs of the environment; whilst giving upstream communities certainty that they will be able to recover from drought during this critical opportunity. We need certainty so we can all recover from this drought."

"A flow target would give certainty and allow drought recovery to occur across the state."

All water-users recognise that higher priority town and environmental reserves must be met first and the water management plans are about equitable water sharing. The issue we currently have is that NSW needs to establish flow targets for this particular event, which will enable the reinstatement of their Water Sharing Plans.

The commitment to 'real-time' management seems to be difficult to accomplish without regional input. An increased presence on the ground in the regions would greatly assist with river management and decision making.

All flows are different and this drought is unprecedented, but all stakeholders must have certainty by knowing that established rules are being followed or there can be no confidence in their processes.

It is the role of Government to facilitate drought recovery, and getting water sharing arrangements operational again is an essential part of those efforts. Farmers have been under extreme economic, social and psychological stress resulting from the drought, now is therefore the time for clear leadership for the State.

Whilst no pumping from rivers has yet occurred, as irrigation farmers respect that higher priority needs must still be prioritised, we need a clear pathway forward for how our farmers can get back on their feet,

Our farmers have walked along dry river beds for 3 years, and clearly defined targets are necessary for the whole system to recover.

For further information:

Luke Simpkins – CEO NSW Irrigators' Council

0410 976 919

Approved JC/TN