
MEDIA RELEASE

Basin States slammed as insensitive and counterproductive

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Communities have slammed Basin Governments who were unwilling to support a motion moved by NSW and Victoria at last week's Ministerial Council meeting, calling the action "insensitive and counterproductive".

"The lack of support by other Basin Governments is insensitive to the communities who continue to suffer from the impacts of severe drought, bushfires, and water reforms," said NSW Irrigators' Council (NSWIC) CEO, Luke Simpkins.

"These other states have forgotten that just months ago we had towns running out of water, homes destroyed by bushfires, and farmers without a water allocation for up to 3 years."

"Failure for projects to be completed will not only expose already struggling communities to more drastic measures, but jeopardises achieving the intended environmental benefits."

"If the other Basin States were serious about achieving these environmental benefits, they would have taken the advice of the many reviews and inquiries which have insisted that more time is needed to get the best possible outcomes."

"We encourage South Australia, Queensland and the ACT to reconsider their position, and put our environment and people before politics. Unfortunately while there is no down side for them, this certainly comes at the cost of NSW irrigation farmers."

"This is not about one state versus another, this is about working together through logical and informed decision-making based on expert advice to best manage the Basin."

"If we want to achieve the intended environmental benefits, and allow our communities to recover, we must extend the deadline."

In a statement last week, following the *MDBA June 2020 Report Card* which showed SDL Adjustment Mechanism progress in the red, NSWIC said "This is our biggest risk to the water for farming into the future". "There should be no need for any more water to be recovered from irrigators if these SDLAM projects are done properly."

We thank NSW Water Minister, Melinda Pavey, for taking up this serious and important matter for our communities, and we thank Victoria for their cooperation and understanding.