

Media release

Monday 8 September 2014



Murray Irrigation

Minister's message welcomed

Minister for Natural Resources, Lands and Water, Kevin Humphries told local water industry stakeholders that he wants to ensure the Commonwealth is effectively managing environmental water before further water recovery is undertaken.

The message was welcomed by irrigation industry representatives who met with the Minister when he toured the Murray Irrigation region last Thursday 4 September.

The Minister's tour started at Murray Irrigation's Deniliquin head office where Chairman Bruce Simpson explained that the Basin Plan water recovery is already having a significant impact through temporary water market prices.

"While efficiency spending is much better than buyback, at the end of the day it is still water being taken out of the productive pool and that is going to have an impact," Mr Simpson said.

"That is why our industry and our community want to be confident that the NSW Government will achieve the full suite of offsets allowable under the SDL adjustment mechanism in the Basin Plan."

The Minister was joined by Southern Riverina Irrigators' (SRI) Chairman, John Bradford as he toured the properties of Ricegrowers' Association Deniliquin Branch Chairman, Nick Morona and Colligen Creek irrigator, Dennis Gleeson where he was shown examples of on-farm efficiencies.

Both Mr Simpson and Mr Bradford agreed that the Minister's position was endorsed by Murray Irrigation and SRI.

"It was good to see the Minister interested in our district and our concerns," Mr Bradford said.

"It is clear he understands irrigation communities and the pressure we are under."

"He agreed that the Commonwealth needs to manage environmental water better rather than keep putting their hand out for more (water) and indicated that he would like no further water recovery until that is done."

"That is where offsets will come into play to make sure the water they already have is used to the best effect and reduce the need for recovery," he said.

Another key issue for the region is the Constraints Management Strategy currently being prepared by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) but needing agreement from State Ministers before projects can proceed.

John Lolicato and Louise and Andrew Burge from the Murray Valley Water Users Association explained the geography of the region to Minister Humphries and why managing constraints in the Edward-Wakool system and around the Barmah Choke will be complex and NSW must be sure that local landholders concerns have been addressed before agreeing with any MDBA proposals.

Ends.

Photos supplied:

Img 3009: RGA Deniliquin Branch Chairman, Nick Morona (right) and wife Diane with Minister Kevin Humphries (Centre)

Img 3013: Minister Kevin Humphries with Murray Valley Water Users Association Chairman John Lolicato

Img 3023: Minister Kevin Humphries with SRI Chairman John Bradford and Wakool Landholders' Association Chairman David May at "Colligen Creek".

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