

# Media release



Murray Irrigation

Monday 19 January 2015

## Deputy Premier told we must protect our water

NSW Deputy Premier Troy Grant was told by Murray Irrigation and Southern Riverina Irrigators (SRI) that water and the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is still a significant issue impacting on communities and investment in the Murray region and the State has a critical role to play.

Murray Irrigation Chairman Bruce Simpson and SRI Chairman John Bradford travelled to Dubbo on Thursday 15 January to meet with Mr Grant and discuss several issues relating to the State's responsibilities to implement the Basin Plan.

"The meeting was constructive," Mr Simpson said.

"Troy was Parliamentary Secretary to Minister Hodgkinson when she had responsibility for water and he was very involved in structuring the State's response to the Basin Plan so he understands the issues.

"We reminded him of the strong stand NSW has taken to try to minimise the negative impact of water recovery and told him the job is not over, and on some issues like finding offsets for sustainable diversion limits, it is still early days."

"It is important that stakeholders are not forgotten when Ministers and officials are having discussions about SDL offset projects, Menindee Lakes and relevant rule changes.

"Troy is Minister for Trade and Investment. The reality is, water is the key to investment in our region. We need secure, reliable water to give farmers and businesses alike the confidence to invest and to continue to build our trading markets in commodities like rice."

Mr Bradford said it was encouraging to see that Mr Grant had a sound understanding of the realities and difficulties of the water debate across the State.

"Troy gets it, he understands it. We just now need to make sure that with that understanding comes action to ensure that NSW, especially southern NSW is not sold out in any negotiations about water savings and further recovery because we're an easy target," Mr Bradford said.

"The problem in the Murray is, our water is not entirely in NSW control. We don't want the State Government to think it is easier for them to concentrate on water they control rather than worrying about the hassle of dealing with the other jurisdictions.

"It was great that Murray Irrigation and SRI could represent a strong and united voice from our region which clearly showed the Deputy Premier that we are a community with grave concerns and we should not be ignored."

Mr Simpson agreed saying the potential for this region to have a strong and prosperous future is dependent on the State ensuring that NSW water interests are protected.

[photograph attached. Caption: *Murray Irrigation Chairman Bruce Simpson, Water Policy Officer Perin Davey, Executive Manager Jennifer McLeod with SRI Chairman John Bradford in Dubbo to meet with Deputy Premier Troy Grant.*]

Ends

19 January 2015

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