

Media release



Murray Irrigation

Monday 2 February 2015

Change of focus needed in Basin Plan

Murray Irrigation will show the new Parliamentary Secretary to the Environment Minister and the new MDBA Chairman the benefit of investing in on and off-farm infrastructure when they visit the region on Tuesday 3 February.

"We want to show them the positive benefits infrastructure investment can have both on and off-farm as well as ensuring the economic strength of production is retained in the community," Bruce Simpson, Chairman of Murray Irrigation said.

"We will be explaining to Mr Baldwin and Mr Andrew how important the SDL adjustment is to this region. It means the difference between this area seeing a reduction of 30 percent of productive water to more than 40 percent," he said.

"That is significant change to the productive capacity of the region and has flow-on impacts in the community.

"To date the MDBA has only looked at how to get good environmental outcomes without considering the costs," Mr Simpson said.

"It is time they took a serious look at how to get good environmental outcomes without causing negative impacts on the community, and if that means investing in works and measures, then so be it.

"Without a change in focus, irrigation communities across all states will continue to decline while the recovered water is left to merely flow down the river channel with no significant environmental improvement," Mr Simpson said.

The tour will also be looking at infrastructure connected with the Koondrook-Perricoota Forest Project, a Living Murray Program environmental work to enhance watering of the iconic Red Gum Forest.

"The forest project is an example of how, by using strategic infrastructure and actively managing water you can achieve significant environmental outcomes without damaging overbank flows outside the targeted area which could flood farms, families and public infrastructure," Mr Simpson explained.

"It is an example of a 'supply measure' that should be recognised for significant offsets through the SDL adjustment mechanism.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Environment Minister, Bob Baldwin and newly announced MDBA Chairman Neil Andrew will be travelling through parts of the southern connected Basin on a familiarisation tour with senior members of the Department of Environment and the MDBA.

"We are encouraged that the new Parliamentary Secretary and Chair are hitting the ground running and getting out and about to experience first-hand the impacts of what is happening in the Basin," Mr Simpson said.

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