

ABC water allegations disappointing and disturbing

Allegations of irregular water extraction aired by the ABC's Four Corners program are disappointing and disturbing according to a statement released today by acting chair of Murray Irrigation Limited Ben Barlow.

"Murray Irrigation expects the full suite of Federal and State investigative resources to pursue every allegation and accusation with vigour and it needs to happen very quickly if the Basin Plan is to remain intact," he said.

"If substantiated, the allegations constitute a serious betrayal of every sector seeking to create a better Murray.

"We cannot afford any relationship that favours any group over another and which seeks to circumvent either the Basin Plan or any element of the *Water Act*," he said.

Mr Barlow said Murray Irrigation's Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program (PIIOP) Round 2 \$206.3 million infrastructure upgrades and its closed system provide its landholders and Basin Plan stakeholders with a high level of integrity that would be envied by many who appear affected by the upstream allegations.

"While it is prudent for the company to provide investigators and authorities with the clear air to go about their business we strongly encourage close scrutiny of any investigations by the NSW and National Irrigators Council," Mr Barlow said.

The ABC's Four Corners program mentioned can be viewed via this link:

<http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2017/07/24/4705065.htm>

Ends.

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