

# Chairman's report

Friday 20 July 2012



Murray Irrigation

The Chairman's report from Murray Irrigation Limited Chairman Noel Graham following the monthly meeting of the Murray Irrigation Board of Directors.

## **Water efficiency allocation**

The Board agreed to a water efficiency allocation of three percent of permanent delivery entitlements, excluding Class A (Town Water Supply).

## **Murray-Darling Basin Plan**

The Board considered the response to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) by the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council on Monday 9 July and compared it to the recommendations proposed by Murray Irrigation in our submission on the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

The Ministerial Council response contained high level recommendations for the MDBA to consider. Of the 12 key concerns raised in our submission, six have been adopted in principal and a further three go some way towards addressing our concerns. The three areas that have not been addressed are, in isolation, inconsequential to the overall balance of the final Basin Plan.

Whilst there is still a long way to go, the combined efforts of the irrigation sector and the community have made significant progress towards achieving a Basin Plan that is vastly superior to what was first advocated.

## **Muddied Waters documentary proposal**

Murray Irrigation's Board today considered the Muddied Water's proposal for a website and documentary to expose key concerns behind the development of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan to the wider public.

The Board supports, in principle, the intent of this proposal. However, at this point in time Murray Irrigation has decided not to pledge money to the proposal.

The Board understands that some of our shareholders will be disappointed with this decision. The Board in making this decision evaluated the potential benefits of the proposal against our concerns with the timelines proposed for the documentary's production and the lack of clarity about its content.

The Board considers that the political debate is at a crucial time, particularly the negotiations between the State Ministers. We believe the efforts in the next few weeks should focus on direct advocacy. The proposed documentary funded by 'upstream irrigators' has the potential to open up further conflict between South Australia and the upstream states, at a very delicate time in the debate.

It is for these reasons the Board, chose not to financially support the proposal at this time.

## **Policy changes**

The Board made some changes to the following policies, Water Distribution Rules, Total Farm Water Balance Policy and Ricegrowing Policy. The updated policies will be available from our website next week. The changes to the policies are minor only and should be considered as improvements.

## **Customer Service Committee**

Directors congratulated Michael Hughes on his election to Chairman of the NSW Murray Lower Darling State Water Customer Service Committee. State Water's operations are important to the efficiency of river operations and are the major component of bulk water charges, which is one of our largest business costs. Participation in this committee is an important opportunity to provide direction to State Water.



**Noel Graham**  
Chairman