

Basin Plan amendment critical to achieving plan

The National Irrigators' Council (NIC) says a [basin plan amendment, adjusting proposed Sustainable Diversion Limits \(SDL\) by 605GL](#), is critical, and has urged Federal Members of Parliament to put delivering the plan ahead of short-term political considerations.

The Commonwealth Government [announced](#) the instrument had been registered, this week, also pointing out that it is disallowable by the Parliament.

NIC CEO Steve Whan said, "the SDL adjustment mechanism has always been a part of the basin plan, it was agreed by each basin state and by the Federal Parliament in 2012. More importantly, it is critical to delivering basin plan outcomes and to the capacity to deliver the plan in full.

"Calls for the Senate to disallow this amendment from some South Australian politicians, are short sighted, and in the case of some Greens Party comments, factually wrong.

"The SDL adjustment is not giving back water that has already been recovered. It is reducing the target in exchange for measures that improve environmental outcomes by improving the delivery of water.

"Knocking these projects back would come at a huge cost to the environment and irrigation communities. Without these projects, it will not be physically possible to get environmental flows to their target areas and if reconfiguring Menindee Lakes does not happen then 80GL of the 426GL that evaporates each year will continue to evaporate, instead of flowing down the lower Darling to South Australia.

"If the law is disallowed then it is possible it could mean the end of the basin plan – that's not a threat from irrigators - we want the plan implemented because it gives certainty and stability for investment. However, if the Goulburn Murray has to give up another 170GL of water, Murrumbidgee another 160GL or the South Australian Murray another 52GL, then it is very hard to see how State Governments could continue to back the plan.

"This SDL adjustment means Southern Basin rivers will have achieved the targets for the 2750GL component of the basin plan. Governments and communities will need to work together to ensure that the additional 450GL can be delivered, as it was promised, without negative impacts on communities.

"Irrigators want to see a healthy river, healthy communities and to be able to produce the food and fibre we all enjoy. We want to work with political representatives to implement the basin plan."

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