



National Irrigators' Council

Level 2, NFF House, 14-16 Brisbane Ave
Barton ACT 2600

Ph: 02 6273 3637
ABN: 92133308326

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Irrigators welcome SDL flexibility

National Irrigators' Council Chair Gavin McMahon has welcomed today's decision by Commonwealth and State Environment and Water Ministers (MINCO) to agree to an amendment to the Basin Plan that would provide for a second round of projects by 30 June 2017, under the sustainable diversion limit (SDL) adjustment mechanism.

Notification regarding SDL projects was due on 30 June 2016.

"The Commonwealth and the States are commended for reaching the sensible decision to allow further time for a second round of projects to be developed in addition to those already put forward in the mix, to maximise all supply contributions under the SDL adjustment mechanism.

"This approach will enable communities and governments to work together to reach an outcome with minimal impact with the aim of a reduction in water being removed from communities.

"National Irrigators' Council has long argued for flexibility around timelines that would enable the required work to be done on project proposals to gain maximum benefit and to enable all possible supply contributions to be achieved towards meeting the 650 gigalitres (GL) target under the SDL adjustment mechanism," Mr McMahon said.

The SDL adjustment mechanism stocktake report released by MINCO in August 2015 found a supply contribution of around 500 GL towards an outcome of up to 650 GL.

The Council has always stressed that reforms under the Basin Plan should not focus solely on water as the singular management tool, but must include a range of measures that give equal balance to food and fibre production, the socio and economic outcomes for communities and the environment. In relation to the measures to be notified early next week, the Council will be looking for initiatives like carp control measures and the release of the koi herpes virus, an initiative supported by the Council.

"We will continue to voice our support for investment in infrastructure and the modernisation of irrigation systems that provide water savings resulting in broader flow on benefits to irrigated agriculture and the communities supported by the industry," Mr McMahon said.

For further information:

Gavin McMahon, Chair, NIC (*SDL Adjustment Mechanism*): 0419 038 962

Michael Murray, Director, NIC (*Northern Basin*): 0427 707 868