

Wednesday, 7 July 2010

National Irrigators' Council heads to the Riverland

Irrigators from across the country will converge on the Riverland in South Australia next week as the National Irrigators' Council holds its July meeting in Renmark.

The NIC is visiting the Riverland on Monday and Tuesday at the invitation of South Australian Murray Irrigators, an NIC member.

NIC CEO, Danny O'Brien, said the visit will include a tour of the region on Monday looking at environmental sites and visiting a local farm to examine irrigation techniques, before the full Council meeting on Tuesday.

"We're very proud that we have a breadth of membership in the NIC encompassing all Murray Darling Basin states, members outside the Basin, different industries and commodities and varying irrigation systems and I know all our delegates are looking forward to a first-hand look at the Riverland.

"All of our members, particularly in the Basin, have been doing it tough in recent years with little or no water allocations and they understand the situation has been no better in the Riverland.

"The visit will be an opportunity to see how other farmers have been coping with the drought and low commodity prices, particularly in the wine industry."

The tour will include a briefing on environmental works at Chowilla floodplain as well as formal and casual discussions with local irrigators.

"One of the benefits of the national council is that it brings irrigators together and helps them better understand the challenges different groups are facing. This visit will help improve that level of understanding and we congratulate SAMI for the initiative in inviting its fellow NIC members to come and have a look," Mr O'Brien said.

"When we have discussions like this we generally find that irrigators realise they have more in common than they sometimes think. Building on those shared experiences and concerns helps us to present a united front to governments and the wider community."

Mr O'Brien said the forthcoming Murray Darling Basin Plan will be a key topic of discussion at the meeting, along with the future of irrigation research and development.

Some NIC members will also take part in a community forum in Renmark on Tuesday night at which local irrigators and community members can find out more about the Basin Plan and other irrigation issues.

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