

Wednesday 21st March, 2011

Adelaide and Canberra should practice what they preach

The National Irrigators' Council said when it comes to water the only thing flowing out of Adelaide and Canberra was hypocrisy.

The CEO of the National Irrigators' Council (NIC), Tom Chesson said despite making plenty of noise about the need for reform in the Murray Darling Basin, neither Adelaide or Canberra were giving up one drop of water for the environment.

"In fact the ACT Government is increasing its take from the Murray Darling Basin by building a new dam twenty times bigger than the dam it is replacing and in the last drought Adelaide increased its water take from the basin when every water user had their allocations cut.

"Yesterday the NIC which represents 34 organisations from across the MBD heard a passionate plea from Sam Dodd, a fifth generation irrigator on the Southern tip of Lake Albert (SA) who said despite two years of major flooding upstream the high river flows were still not delivering potable water to in Lake Albert.

"Mr Dodd made the point that unless there was better management and infrastructure works on Lake Albert just adding water will not solve the environmental problems in the lower lakes.

"Through the Meningie Narrung Lakes Irrigator Association and the South Australian Murray Irrigators we would like to see the South Australian Government support its irrigators by funding feasibility studies into;

1. Removing the Causeway between Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert
2. Fully Remove the Bund which was built during the drought which severed Lake Albert from Lake Alexandrina [as promised by the SA Government](#)
3. Selectively Dredging the Narrung Narrows
4. A channel and/or a pipeline connecting Lake Albert to the Coorong
5. Returning natural flows to the southern end of the Coorong. (SE drains)

In addition the National Irrigators' Council supported the push by our South Australian members for the seventy year old barrages to be bought into the 21st century.

"A feasibility study into automating more gates, equipped with environmental sensors monitoring water quality in real time, which in turn would trigger the raising and lowering of the gates on the various barrages to maintain optimum water quality needs to be urgently undertaken."

"This would reduce the amount of sea water intrusion into the lakes, minimising the need for dilution flows.

"We need more than hypocrisy and fine words from our capital cities – we need a realistic approach to solving environmental problems which doesn't destroy upstream communities," Mr Chesson said.

Contact: Tom Chesson 0418 41 5597

Sam Dodd: (Irrigator on Lake Albert) 0428 393 907