

Media Release



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Murray Irrigation cautiously welcomes Labor's water policy

Murray Irrigation General Manager Anthony Couroupis has cautiously welcomed the Labor Party's announcement earlier today to recover the gap between current diversions in the Murray-Darling Basin and the proposed new sustainable diversion limits, but reiterates this is not an approval of the upcoming Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Mr Couroupis said the Prime Minister's announcement to buy back from willing sellers any water needed to meet the new SDLs was a step in the right direction.

"The acquisition of water must occur in the market between willing buyers and willing sellers. If the government wants water for the environment, or for any other purpose, then they should buy it," Mr Couroupis said.

"This ensures that our customers who wish to stay in the industry to keep producing Australia's high quality food and fibre can do so.

"We need the government to continue to recover water through savings from investment in infrastructure (such as on-farm and upgrades) and then water purchases."

Mr Couroupis added that Murray Irrigation remains acutely sceptical of the Basin Plan process.

"All along Murray Irrigation has been calling for a balance between environmental, social and economic returns from our available water resources.

"We remain very concerned that the proposed Basin Plan will decimate rural communities, by eliminating significant amounts of water from productive use by Basin communities. This will bring the loss of jobs, people leaving rural areas and family farms forced to close.

"All Australians - each and every family - will suffer if an appropriate balance cannot be met between the needs of the environment, food and fibre producers, and rural communities.

"We need assurance that the upcoming Basin Plan will create that balance and return confidence to provide for investment in our futures.

"If this cannot be delivered by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, then we need a strong government who can make it happen, for the sake of our families and the future of our rural communities," Mr Couroupis said.

Ends.

For more information contact Murray Irrigation General Manager Anthony Couroupis T. 03 5898 3300.