

Submission - Murray Irrigation Floodplain Harvesting



12 August 2021

Submission in relation to - Select Committee on Floodplain Harvesting

The Committee is asked to note the great concern of Murray Irrigation and its shareholders that floodplain harvesting in the Northern Basin of the Murray Darling Basin should be managed in accordance with agreed standards and within the caps established by interstate agreements.

Over the past 20 years the yield of General Security entitlements in the Southern Basin has fallen from an average 74% to an average now of under 50%. There are a number of factors that contribute to this loss of yield.

One of these factors is the reduced contribution of Northern Basin flows to the Murray system at Wentworth. This has placed an increasing load on the Southern Basin and reduced the available resource available to General Security.

Murray Irrigation submits that the Upper House Inquiry into Floodplain Harvesting should provide the NSW Government with a workable path that will:

- Enable Government, communities and irrigators to establish and implement agreements to meter, monitor and cap floodplain extractions in the Northern Basin
 - o Quantify volumes required to be licensed and metered and the impacts this may have on the modelled outcomes of long-term average flows to the Menindee Lakes
- Lead to a sustainable connected system across the Murray Darling Basin, especially connecting the Northern and Southern Basins
 - o Recognise the negative impact of reduced flows through the Lower Darling on the sustainability of all users in the Southern Basin, including environment, irrigators and the State of South Australia
- Meet its obligations within Australian and NSW legislation:
 - o Operating river systems under its control within the agreed caps
 - o Metering with required accuracy and monitoring river flows
 - o Remove floodplain diversion and storage infrastructure where it is unlicensed
- Expedite these actions and ensure that a robust framework is put in place.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip Endley".

Philip Endley
CEO
Murray Irrigation