

## Landmark ag water agreement

Murray Irrigation and the NSW Government have signed an historic agreement that represents a significant coup for the entire southern Murray-Darling Basin.

An interim Escapes Agreement now enables WaterNSW to bypass the notorious Barmah Choke by using Murray Irrigation's billion dollar Mulwala Canal to deliver water downstream with minimum losses to the environment and agricultural water users.

Murray Irrigation CEO Michael Renehan said the agreement was a win for Murray Irrigation and WaterNSW, as well as downstream river users and the environment.

"Using our infrastructure relieves the pressure on the Murray River during heavy demand and provides the river operator with a greater range of strategic options to run the river," Mr Renehan said.

"At the same time, Murray Irrigation benefits commercially through increased water use in its system."

Prior to the agreement, WaterNSW had to convey water orders along the Murray River and through all of its natural restrictions – including the Barmah Choke.

"The Barmah Choke restricts the amount of water that can be delivered, as well as the time it takes to deliver water," Mr Renehan said.

"It is an inefficient means of transporting water through the southern connected system.

"The water lost is out of the resource pool for allocation and this agreement will have immediate benefits to Murray Irrigation water users."

NSW Minister for Regional Water Niall Blair also praised the agreement.

"Moving large volumes of water through a river system is a big and complex task which has been made more difficult this year with the climatic conditions leading to major water losses within the Murray system," Mr Blair said.

"This agreement is great news in the lead up to summer when demand can peak, as it gives river operators another tool in their water delivery toolbox."

**Ends.**

**Media contact: Nathan Holahan 0417 348 314.**