

REGIONAL COMMUNITIES DESERVE BETTER

RDA Riverina reaffirms its support of the Murray Darling Basin Plan following a Disallowance Motion passed in the Senate last week.

Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young moved a Disallowance Motion to overturn recommendations by the Murray Darling Basin Authority to reduce by 70 gigalitres the water recovery target for the Northern Basin within the Murray Darling Basin Plan (MDPB). The Motion passed with the support of the Labor Party and some of the cross-bench.

Despite this Disallowance Motion, RDA Riverina has pledged its support for the plan as the correct long-term option for the region.

“There is no factual basis for the Disallowance Motion,” Director of Regional Development and CEO Rachel Whiting said.

“When the Basin Plan became law with bipartisan support in November 2012, it contained a requirement for a Northern Basin Review. The outcome of this review was a recommendation that the recovery target should be reduced by 70 gigalitres to reduce unacceptable socio-economic impacts at a ‘cost’ of very slightly reduced environmental outcomes.

“This was triple bottom line thinking in action, all within the Plan's overall objective of creating a ‘Healthy, Working Basin’. It is not correct to say 70 gigalitres is being taken away from the environment. Water use is being rebalanced to deliver more water to the environment, and the Northern Basin Review did exactly what was originally proposed, by adjusting the recovery target in the light of the best available information.

“There is no basis for saying that this recovery reduction rewards bad behaviour by irrigators. The fraudulent use of water by certain irrigators who just happen to be in the Northern Basin is a matter for the states, to ensure compliance with existing regulation, and is nothing to do with the Plan.”

Ms Whiting said the impacts of NSW withdrawing from the Plan are unclear, and would certainly reduce levels of confidence and certainty for our community, as well as putting future funding from the Australian Government in doubt.

“While we acknowledge there has been some pain involved in the adjustment and rebalancing process, the Plan has been and will be beneficial to the Riverina community overall. There is no doubt the Plan has delivered certainty to the Riverina region, as witnessed by the levels of investment made in the Riverina over the past five years.



“Change is not easy, but the Plan is a long-term strategy that will deliver a highly productive and efficient irrigation industry, with an effective water market. Investment based on this new ‘business as usual’ will deliver jobs and growth for the Riverina.

“To now cast doubt on the future of the Plan is not helpful. Playing political games with the future of our people must stop. Our regional communities deserve better.”

- Ends -

MEDIA NOTE: For more information, contact RDA Riverina Director of Regional Development and CEO Rachel Whiting on 0429 444 213.

