

**Southern Riverina Irrigation Districts Council**

Incorporating:
Berrigun Irrigators' Central Council
Wakool Landholders' Association
Deniboote Landholders' Association
Deninein Landholders' Association

Deniliquin NSW 2710
Chairman: Mr Laurie Arthur
Phone: 03 5887 3280
Policy Officer: Mrs Deborah Kerr
Phone: 03 5882 1129

RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE MURRAY-DARLING BASIN WATER CAP

SRIDC supports the position of the NSW Irrigators Council Southern Valleys and in addition we would make the following broad comments.

Our irrigators called for a capping of extractions. We believed that individual groups would be capped at their existing extractions and this did not occur. SRIDC would have supported the capping of the NSW Murray in two parts: one cap for above the Barmah Milewa Choke and another for those extractors below the Choke. This option would have delivered improved equity to individuals within the NSW Murray Valley.

The decision in the review for the Project Board to hand over the equity considerations to the states is not an adequate response as the NSW Government has indicated it has no intention of addressing the situation in a substantial way. (We have been given small considerations with limited priority access to off allocation flows but these will be reduced in the long term).

The above situation combined with no real property right as indicated in the draft exposure bill (NSW Water Management Act 2000) puts our members in a precarious position. The bill offers little in the way of compensation or tenure and further puts at risk investment in irrigated agriculture and existing financial arrangements with bankers.

SRIDC Response to MDBC Cap Review

The situation will worsen when the current Community Reference Committee (soon to be called Water Management Committee) implements an environmental flows regime for the Murray Valley. Further, the MDBC Project Board is also considering an environmental flows regime.

The worst thing that can now happen to our members is that having suffered the above inequities, we are impacted by any softening of the Cap in valleys that have end of system river flows into the Murray River. These river end of river flows (in terms of volume, timing and quality) must be maintained as per the Cap. If they are not, our members will be impacted severely as South Australia's share will be increasingly drawn from the NSW Murray resource set.

Prepared By
Laurie Arthur
Chairman
Southern Riverina Irrigation Districts' Council