



NSW IRRIGATORS' COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

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Commonwealth/Victoria Water Trading Deal A Cap by Any Other Name

The NSW Irrigators Council is underwhelmed by the deal announced today by the Victorian Premier and the Prime Minister to marginally shift Victorian caps on water trade to the Commonwealth.

Under the deal, the Commonwealth expects to purchase some 160 gigalitres prior to the 4% annual cap being hit, with a further 300 gigalitres over 5 years to be allowed above the cap over that same period.

“Let’s put this in context – 297 gigalitres has already been purchased from New South Wales over a period dramatically less than five years,” Council Chief Executive Officer Andrew Gregson said.

“Our position all along is that states must be treated equally. A trade barrier is a trade barrier whether it be expressed in percentage terms or volumes. If this cap is applied in Victoria, the other states – including NSW – should expect relative equal treatment.

“We also note that the deal to remove the 4% cap in 2014 has a darker side – no movement whatsoever is to be required until July 2010; another two years.

Despite being underwhelmed at the trading details, the Council now hopes that focus can return to what it says is the key to obtaining environmental water without devastating rural and regional communities and economies.

“Infrastructure investment, both on and off farm, is critical to this whole process – yet not a cent has been spent. The Commonwealth must immediately move to have infrastructure projects fast tracked to both deliver environmental water and to show regional and rural communities that they are serious about this process.”

ENDS