



MEDIA RELEASE

11 December 2017

MI welcomes 'promising' report on water recovery programs

Murrumbidgee Irrigation (MI) has welcomed the findings of a report into the economic effects of water recovery programs in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA).

The report used predictive modelling to estimate the local and regional economic effects of Australian Government water recovery programs, intended to Bridge the Gap under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan in the MIA.

MI CEO, Brett Jones, said that the report was "promising," and supports the policy position that MI have maintained throughout the development, and implementation, of the Plan.

"The report confirms what we have always known," he said.

"Investment in infrastructure programs supports communities - buyback retires debt."

Mr Jones, said it was fortunate for the MIA that the Australian Government's switch to focus on infrastructure programs over buyback, was not too late.

"Unlike in other areas, who weren't so lucky," he said.

"Fortunately, most of the water recovered in our region has been through investment programs and not buyback."

MI have always maintained that buyback was a blunt instrument that hurts communities.

"Because of the resilience and diversity in our area, where farmers did participate in buyback, most sold only part of their water entitlements, and retained delivery rights.

"This means they were releasing capital to support their future business needs," Mr Jones explained.

Mr Jones added that MI have always supported the triple bottom line outcomes of the Plan.

"One that focuses on achieving social, economic and environmental outcomes. Not a plan that focuses on numbers and water recovery at all costs," he said.

"There are smarter ways to achieve the Plan's triple-bottom line outcomes and the Australian Government's almost \$348 million investment in infrastructure projects in our community demonstrates that."

"As part of the community we are fully invested in the Basin's future and working together to achieve the same outcomes.

"We want a healthy working basin to support the growth and opportunity in our region".

Photo: The sun sets over a section of the Sturt Canal

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