



MEDIA RELEASE

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Labor's decision to undermine rural Australia for political expediency

The Ricegrowers' Association of Australia (RGA) is appalled with the Labor Party's decision to vote down the Murray Darling Basin Authority's recommendations to the Federal Government.

"We urge Labor to reconsider its position on plans to support the Greens motion and vote for a disallowance motion. It is extremely disappointing that the Labor Party has decided to break the bipartisan approach to the Basin Plan and vote against an element of the Basin Plan it was responsible for commencing" RGA President, Jeremy Morton said.

In accordance with the requirements of the Basin Plan, the MDBA last year recommended that the recovery target for the Northern Basin be reduced by 70 gigalitres. The MDBA's comprehensive study of the Northern Basin, undertaken over a period of years, found that the target environmental outcomes could be achieved with reduced socioeconomic impacts for communities if environmental water is used in a more efficient manner. Consequently the MDBA recommended that the water recovery target be reduced by 70 gigalitres and that a series of environmental works and measures referred to as 'toolkit measures' be implemented to improve the environmental outcomes achieved.

"This is pure politics, designed to win over the uninformed South Australian voter ahead of the South Australian State election early this year" said Mr Morton.

"The Labor Party would do well to remember that the Greens have never supported the Basin Plan and voted against it in 2012. So why would they side with them now to vote against a change to the Plan that's purpose is to improve the delivery of environmental water, while at the same time protecting the health of our Basin communities"

"Regional New South Wales and Victoria have borne the brunt of this Basin Plan, incurring the most social and economic damage in its roll-out. Now the Federal opposition have chosen to align themselves with a political campaign in South Australia, at the expense of further damage to rural communities within the upstream States."

"This is not what New South Wales and Victoria signed up for and any reasonable person could understand why they would consider walking away from this Plan. The economic resilience of agriculture within these States is continually compromised by Federal and South Australian politics, and for what benefit?" said Jeremy.

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The RGA strongly supports the stance taken by NSW Minister for Rural Water, the Hon. Niall Blair MLC, who responded to this threat yesterday by stating that NSW will reconsider their participation in Ministerial Council if this Motion is successful.

Ends

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