



The Peak body for five landholder associations and 1600 irrigators in the Murray Valley

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Media Release

NSW Government can find \$137M to buy back water, but can't find \$20M to assist food producers (irrigators) to pay their fixed charges for water they have not received.

Environment Minister Firth's announcement on the 27 May 2008 that the NSW Government plan to spend \$137m to purchase permanent water entitlements in the next twelve months stating that this action will assist irrigators is a farce.

Mr Tim McKindlay (deputy chairman of SRI) states that Minister Firth's comments to the ABC yesterday, portrays a total lack of understanding of the current financial state irrigator's and businesses are experiencing in our region.

Minister Firth's justification was:

*"Say they (Irrigators) go 'Look, we're not going to be able to do this crop this year or something, they can sell their water license to the government," she said.
"That gives them an income stream. It doesn't necessarily mean they leave the land but at least they've got some money to go for that year."*

Mr McKindlay states that the NSW Government is ignoring the requests from our region that irrigator's are desperate for assistance from government to waive fixed water charges.

For the Minister to assume and state publicly that purchasing water entitlements will assist irrigator's is akin to a trucking company selling its haulage trailers to assist cash flow.

SRI is seeking urgent consultation with NSW politicians to discuss these issues further.

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