



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

---

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Southern Riverina Irrigators (SRI) have rejected The Wentworth Group's latest report labelling it a "joke" according to SRI Chairman Ted Hatty.

The Wentworth Groups latest report, released yesterday, highlights the potential real agenda for water reform in the Murray Darling Basin.

"Clearly this is about getting more water to flow down the Murray to the Lower Lakes in South Australia," Mr Hatty said.

The report, proposes cuts in water currently used for growing food, by 39 percent in the Murray and 65 percent in the Murrumbidgee Catchments.

Proposing these excessive types of cuts is a joke," Mr Hatty said.

The Wentworth Group claim this would only result in a 12 percent and 26 percent reduction in regional profits.

"Social engineering of this scale is a ghost town mentality. Mr Hatty said the report fails to mention what is the real impact on Australia's ability to grow its own food in the future.

"SRI believe claims for water reductions in the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valley are about obtaining a greater share of water resources for South Australia in order to address the ecological problems of the Coorong and Lower Lakes.

"The environmental problems of the Coorong are not caused by Murray River flows, they are in fact caused by 125 years of land reclamation and drainage schemes that redirected fresh flows away from the Coorong, directly out to sea.

"The Lower Lakes is a highly modified system created by successive South Australian Government policies. Further, the swamps and wetlands on the Lower reaches of the Murray River and Lower Lakes region were drained and converted for alternate land uses.

"The report is a blatant over-the-top green attempt to grab water with a lack of regard for basin communities and food production.

“In this period of Australia’s most dire drought, when the whole Murray Darling Basin system is crippled by lack of rainfall – it is unrealistic to expect a full river system and the Lower Lakes to be kept at maximum height.

“We need sound science driving this country’s water policies and Australia cannot afford to throw its food security away.” Mr Hatty said.

**Media Contact: Louise Burge 0428 984570 (lbmobile@bigpond.com)**