

S.A.M.I.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MURRAY IRRIGATORS INCORPORATED

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High and dry irrigators seeking help

Irrigators facing the prospect of relocating pumping infrastructure from backwaters to the main River Murray waterway are calling on the State Government to provide financial assistance.

The State's peak irrigation body, the South Australian Murray Irrigators, said today that the government had a duty of care to help irrigators who would be directly affected by plans to shut down water supply to a series of backwaters along the River Murray.

SAMI chairman Ian Zadow said the shutdowns would leave a number of irrigators high and dry unless they invested significant sums to extend pipelines and relocate pumps in order to obtain water directly from the river.

"We believe that some assistance should be forthcoming for these irrigators," he said.

"It seems only fair that if the Government plans to block backwaters that those affected should be assisted."

Mr Zadow said nine backwaters had already been earmarked for shut downs and he suspected more could be added in the weeks ahead.

"Just how many irrigators this will directly affect is unknown, but the Government must take responsibility for their actions," he said.

He said residents at Barmera who relied on Lake Bonney for stock and domestic water supplies were being provided with alternative arrangements in preparation for the lake's shutdown.

"If it is good enough to help these people, then some level of assistance should be offered to everyone else along the Murray facing the same situation," he said.

"It would seem irrigators are being treated like second class citizens in this regard."

Reduce NRM Levy proportionately

Mr Zadow also called on the State Government to revise the NRM Levy payable by all irrigators. He said the levy should be proportionate to the amount of water they are permitted to use.

"If we only have 50% of our allocation, then we should only pay 50% of the levy," he said.

"Once again, that would seem to be a fair and reasonable concession in these tough times."

Federal leader invited to proposed summit

Mr Zadow said SAMI had invited Federal Water Resources Minister Malcolm Turnbull to facilitate a water summit of all irrigators in the State within the next month.

“We all want answers and the response from both private irrigators and corporations to the proposed summit has been very strong,” he said.

“We would hope that Mr Turnbull acknowledges the importance of the event and attends. I am sure everyone would get something positive out of it.”

- **For further information contact Ian Zadow 0411 555 602 or Tim Whetstone 0428 617 800.**