



Sustainable Irrigated Agriculture

1 September 2017

Page 1 of 2

MEDIA RELEASE

IRRIGATORS STRONGLY REJECT ALLEGATIONS

Border Rivers water users have come out strongly defending their industry against unfounded allegations of wrongdoing, aired on the ABC Lateline program last night. “We can’t address individual matters that are still before a court, but the ABC aired allegations about widespread illegal extraction of water and we flatly reject the assertions. These claims appear to be based on hear-say, urban myths and conjecture from people with little understanding of water management,” Executive Officer, Tim Napier, stated. “State water plans are the foundations we rely on and compliance is strictly enforced, at our insistence, as we are paying for them. Allegations that extractions are not accounted-for in Queensland are false and some simple research would make it obvious, but that level of detail was not covered in the program.”

The administration of levee banks is contentious on floodplains and extends to involve all operations on floodplains including dryland farming and grazing. We are confident that the recent changes to regulation of levee banks in Queensland will improve outcomes for everyone on the floodplain in time.

“The on-farm efficiency programs, like Healthy Headwaters, are the preferred means of water-recovery as they are less harmful to communities than straight buyback. Efficiencies gained preserve productive capacity in our community, while the water is owned by the Commonwealth for the environment. To diminish the effectiveness of these programs is ill-informed. The results are evident in government agency reports that these projects have reduced the collateral damage caused by water recovery while still getting water volumes returned to the river.

Increased flows have been documented by government agencies since water reform started in our valley about 20 years ago. “The greatest improvements will come after water recovery finishes and

Affiliates: Boomi-Gnoura Gnoura Water Users Association; Dumaresq Valley Irrigators Association; Eastern Recharge Groundwater Users Association; Lower Weir River Water Users Association; Macintyre Brook Irrigators Association; Macintyre Valley Cotton Growers Association; Mole & Sovereign Water Users Association; Mungindi Water Users & Cotton Growers Association; Pindari Water Users Association; Upper Weir River & Tributaries Water Users Association

factors other than water are implemented.” Mr Napier said. “Complimentary measures have the potential to multiply benefits from the return of flows to our rivers, which will otherwise be marginal, and do that without killing our local country towns.”

“We didn’t ask for the Basin Plan, but we are doing our best to live with it and defend our local communities from the collateral damage being caused by it.” Mr Napier said.

“Our members have a future in irrigated agriculture, supporting their communities and co-existing alongside other farmers and a healthy environment.”

ENDS

For further information please contact:

Tim Napier

Executive Officer

Border Rivers Food and Fibre

0448 713886

tim.napier@brff.com.au