

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 7 - PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

RATIONALE FOR, AND IMPACTS OF, NEW DAMS AND OTHER WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN NSW

Friday 27 November 2020

**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MS CHRISTINE FREAK, POLICY MANAGER -
NSW IRRIGATORS' COUNCIL**

Question 1: I want to talk about irrigation efficiency which I am sure you are very across. I understand that the Lachlan Valley has not really benefited as much as other valleys in relation to the \$13 billion I gather the Commonwealth's Murray-Darling Basin Plan spent. The Lachlan early on basically had some of the licences bought out—a big block of licences—so therefore did not receive much in terms of irrigation efficiency. Firstly, is my understanding correct?

Answer: “Yes – in the Lachlan valley, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) now holds 87,856 ML of which 81,200 ML (92%) was acquired through purchase rather than efficiency projects. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, there were a number of purchases in the Lachlan prior to 2012, which was before the Basin Plan commenced, and before any Basin Plan reduction targets were set. When the Basin Plan reduction target in the Lachlan was later determined, it had already been met as a result of these earlier purchases. A bit over 6000 ML was acquired via OFIEP from 2009 - 2013, but then the Lachlan wasn't eligible to take part in the later rounds of OFIEP projects. Secondly, the Lachlan is a terminal system, and this lack of hydrological connectivity reduces the utility of this water at achieving some of the Basin-wide connectivity outcomes desired.”

Question 2: Re connectivity between the Macquarie and the Barwon-Darling, with concerns of erosion banks on private land in the Marshes.

Answer: “As this is a valley-specific matter, we refer you to our relevant local Member Organisation – Macquarie River Food & Fibre.”