



Media Release

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Basin Ministers put words into action.

National Farmers' Federation (NFF) Vice President Les Gordon has welcomed the Deputy Prime Minister's release of the terms of reference for a project to independently analyse how Murray-Darling Basin Plan water recovery, through efficiency measures, could be carried out to ensure neutral or improved socio-economic outcomes.

At their Ministerial Council meeting in March, Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Hon Barnaby Joyce MP and his state and Territory colleagues from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia all agreed to this important work to examine the impacts of, and opportunities for, the 'up-water' component of the Basin Plan.

"The NFF is pleased to see Basin Ministers put their March words into action by announcing these terms of reference," Mr Gordon said.

"With our members, the NFF looks forward to working with the independent experts commissioned for this work, to share our experiences of delivering efficiency projects and to explore the full range of costs and benefits - on farm, on the water market and the flow on impacts to our industries and our communities."

During March, Basin Ministers also agreed to a 'credible pathway' for delivering the supply measures or 'down-water' component of the plan. Basin Ministers have until 30 June to nominate their suite of supply measure projects.

"June 30 is a critical deadline and we cannot miss this opportunity," Mr Gordon said.

"We urge Ministers to ensure they nominate a comprehensive suite of projects that can credibly deliver the full 650-gigalitre supply measures component.

"The NFF's position on the down-water has always been clear – Basin Governments must deliver the full 650GL down-water offset as this enables the plan to achieve environmental outcomes while avoiding further socio-economic pain on Basin communities."

Mr Gordon said the NFF recognised the complexities of some of the down-water projects and would take the time to work through them thoroughly.

"We ask that when Basin Ministers come together in June they commit to detailed and meaningful consultation with irrigators and communities to build their confidence and to ensure their needs are met as supply projects are implemented by the 2024 deadline," Mr Gordon said.

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