



The Hon. Rick Mazza MLC
Member for the Agricultural Region
Parliament of Western Australia
Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party



Media Statement

March 6, 2018

Mazza stands with food growers

Agricultural Region MLC Rick Mazza of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has expressed support for Lower South West food growers after they raised concerns about water allocation limits for self-supply landowners in their area.

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation stopped issuing new water licences in eight sub-catchments of the Donnelly River and in six other sub-catchments of the Warren and Donnelly Rivers late last year.

The Department claims the changes are an interim measure as the Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme, proposed under the State Government's *Water for Food* initiative, is currently being explored.

However, food producers in the closed Donnelly River catchments say the Irrigation Scheme is selling water that was intended for farm dams holding water on their properties.

The Irrigation Scheme plans to directly pump water from the Donnelly River and capture water in a 15 gigalitre capacity dam to be built on Record Brook.

Growers in the region voted to reconvene a representative group, Manjimup and Pemberton Landowners, in an effort to address their water allocation limit concerns.

In a letter to the Premier, Manjimup and Pemberton Landowners convener Neil Bartholomaeus not only called for their water rights to be restored, but requested a Water Resource Management Committee to be appointed to manage water allocations in the Warren and Donnelly Rivers, along with a Water Resources Council for the State.

The letter also calls for a statutory local area management plan to be prepared for the Warren and Donnelly Rivers.

In the letter, Mr Bartholomaeus said the changes are "having an immediate negative impact on commercial plans for food production and are causing frustration and anxiety for farming families."

Rick Mazza said the letter Mr Bartholomaeus sent to the Premier alarmingly claimed that none of the water plans in WA are statutory and thus didn't provide security for licence holders.

"Planning provisions in the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act* have been largely ignored since they were introduced in 2000," Mr Mazza said.

"The State Government can deny farmers access to their own water for dams because local area water plans are not statutory with legal status."

Ends

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