

South Australian Murray Irrigators (SAMI)

Answers to questions on notice

- Providing your views on the Productivity Report recommendations.
 - Identify which SDLAM projects should be discontinued and which projects will deliver the water on time.”
- 1) We generally support the recommendations in the Interim Productivity Report including the establishment of separate government entity to assist in completing the recovery of the 3200GL equivalent environmental water. Support for a separate government entity is on the basis that the organisation has sufficient autonomy, flexibility and agility to establish community specific programs that deliver a positive or neutral socio economic outcome for the communities where that water or equivalent environmental water is recovered. The organisation must be given the legal power to be able to deal direct with entities, rather than just through a Basin State, if the community wishes that to occur.
 - 2) SDLAM projects are a critical part of the Basin Plan and the extension of time for Basin States to complete projects, and to include new projects, is welcomed. The responsibility for these projects rests with the Basin States, not the irrigators or irrigation organisations. The Basin State agencies responsible for delivering these projects are best positioned to address this question; we trust they will be asked. Addressing any shortfall on the SDLAM projects by simply reducing the future reliability of water entitlements is not acceptable.

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Answer to written question on notice from Senator Thorpe

“Does your organisation support a levy on all water licenses to go towards a First Nations cultural water fund, as a means of returning water rights that have been stolen back to First Peoples who have sovereign rights to custodianship of the lands and waters?”

The funding of First Nations water ownership is a matter for the whole of the Australian Nation. All Australians use and benefit from our national water assets. The taxation system of Australia is the appropriate mechanism to fund such programs that are in the national interest.

The water market provides opportunity for the acquisition of water for First Nations water ownership should the government provide additional funding through the Australian taxation system. Aboriginal people are best positioned to determine and manage the governance mechanisms for holding and using that water for the long-term economic benefit and well-being of their local communities.