



Media Release

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SA water mismanagement revelations come at critical time for Murray Darling Basin Plan: Cotton Australia

Cotton Australia has expressed disappointment at media reports that South Australia withheld 45 gigalitres of environmental water intended for the Murray Darling Basin, instead diverting it further south for residential and irrigator use.

The organisation's General Manager, Michael Murray, said the revelation about the SA Government's actions in December 2015 to March 2016 – made today in *The Australian* newspaper – came in the lead-up to a critical time for the future of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

"These revelations are particularly disappointing given South Australia's vocal criticism in the past of water management in other states," says Cotton Australia General Manager, Michael Murray. "Indeed, South Australian Water Minister Ian Hunter himself was amongst those who recently slammed water management practices in NSW following media attention on the Barwon-Darling."

"It is completely hypocritical of the South Australian Government to call for investigations into water management in other jurisdictions whilst at the same time managing water in a manner completely contrary to the principles of the Murray Darling Basin Plan."

"We trust that the Senate Inquiry currently underway into the integrity of the water market in the Murray Darling Basin, or any of the other numerous ongoing inquiries, will also turn its attention to South Australia's water management practices."

"While it is true all states could lift their standards of water management, it is critically important for every state to recommit to delivering the Murray Darling Basin Plan. This should include the amendment to the Northern Basin Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDL) and also the SDL Adjustment Mechanism projects in the Southern Basin."

"At the very least, this matter needs to be investigated and resolved before the Basin Water Ministers meet in mid-December to discuss and, hopefully, recommit to the delivery of the Murray Darling Basin Plan."

Cotton Australia is the peak representative body for Australia's cotton growing industry.

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