

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Options for the release of additional water for agriculture a sound investment in the survival of farming communities

With drought conditions worsening across the region, options to assist the region's farmers were put on the table at a meeting of the Centroc Drought Committee with Lachlan Valley Water in Parkes last week.

Lachlan Valley Water (LVW) Chair, Tom Green, says while the sale of 15,000ML of held NSW environmental water allocation to farmers across 5 inland valleys through short-notice tenders has been welcomed, there would be great benefit in selling more water in the Lachlan in a more strategic manner.

"Offering more water for sale at prices that can support the growth of fodder, seed production, or finishing crops could have community wide benefits particularly if the proceeds from the sale of this water is used for complementary measures that improve environmental outcomes, for example, improving fish passage in the river."

Mayor of Lachlan and Chair of Centroc, Councillor John Medcalf says that options that help farmers and communities deal with the impacts of the drought while improving environmental outcomes would be a win/win for the community and the environment and are supported by Centroc."

"While ABARES is predicting that the NSW winter crop will be down 46 per cent on last year, with steep falls also forecast for Queensland and Victoria, farmers are saying it could be worse."

"Unless fodder can be grown locally, it will have to be bought and freighted from Western Australia. Farmers will be forced to spend money outside their communities with little if any return on their investment. Ultimately this means there's no money being spent in town." says Cr Medcalf.

The meeting agreed that options such as the sale of additional water at prices that can support fodder growth would be a sound investment in rural communities and better than having to pick up the pieces later.

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