

Hon Michael McCormack MP  
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600  
[minister.mccormack@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:minister.mccormack@infrastructure.gov.au)

Dear Minister

## **SELF-SUPPLY WATER USERS AND THE SOUTHERN FORESTS IRRIGATION SCHEME**

We write to request a meeting with you when you attend the Nationals WA State Conference in Manjimup 12-13 October 2018. We seek your assistance to recover the rights to water of farming families stripped of their rights to favour the Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme, which was the subject of a twice unsuccessful application for \$40 million under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund.

On 2 March 2018 we wrote to you advising that fourteen sub-catchments of the Warren and Donnelly Rivers were closed for new water licences on 16 November 2017 to favour the Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme. We requested you advise the Western Australian Government that preconditions for any further consideration of \$40 million funding for the Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme be that:

- rights to water for self-supply water users be restored in the fourteen sub-catchments of the Warren and Donnelly Rivers that were closed for new water licences on 16 November 2017, and
- a statutory Warren-Donnelly Water Resource Management Plan be prepared, addressing both the interests of self-supply water users and a potential irrigation scheme.

On 24 May 2018 you wrote in reply that *"I can confirm that the Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme EOI for funding under the capital component of the Fund has not been successful."*

However, the current September 5 edition of the *Manjimup-Bridgetown Times* at page 1 reports the Hon Terry Redman MLA saying that when you visit Manjimup in October he will be speaking to you about the Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme. Mr Redman is quoted saying *"We will seek funding support through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund."*

The web site for the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund clearly says: **"Applications are closed for Expressions of Interest from state and territory governments for capital funding through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund."** Mr Redman's statement conflicts with this. Minister please clarify whether the Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme continues to be eligible for capital funding through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund?

The implications of Mr Redman and others talking up prospects of the twice failed Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme are serious because the State Government continues to deny water rights to self-supply water food producers to favour the Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme. Closure of the fourteen sub-catchments of the Warren and Donnelly Rivers for new water licences on 16 November 2017 denied food producers the opportunity to construct new self-supply dams last summer, and they are still being denied as we approach another dam construction season.

There is abundant water available in streams for new self-supply dams. The Upper Lefroy sub-catchment of the Warren River hosts the greatest concentration of 'farm dams' in Australia. Access to water for food in the Upper Lefroy has been blocked at only 42 percent of mean annual stream flow. We submit up to 70% of water should be available for food production when land use is zoned 'priority agriculture'. Please see image below taken yesterday at the outflow from the Upper Lefroy after all farm dams have filled. This example of water abundance is repeated across the fourteen sub-catchments unreasonably closed to favour the Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme. There is no water shortage in Manjimup.



**Image: Hon Colin Tincknell MLC (on left) on a 'Field Program' with self-supply water users, at the outflow from the Upper Lefroy after farm dams have filled, 10 September 2018.**

We appreciate your consideration of our request for a meeting when you visit Manjimup in October. We also await your clarification on the status of funding of the Southern Forests Irrigation Scheme from the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Neil Bartholomaeus".

Neil Bartholomaeus  
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