

MEDIA RELEASE
20th April 2006

New water licences in the Lachlan will hurt all farmers

Farmers in the Lachlan Valley will be the losers if the NSW Government approves 46 new water licence applications, environmentalists said today.

“Groundwater in the Lachlan Valley is already over-allocated and any further use will severely impact on already stressed rivers,” Cate Faehrmann, Director of the Nature Conservation Council said today.

“The Government still does not know how much water is left in aquifers in the Lachlan Valley. It would be extremely reckless to grant additional water licences without knowing if they have the water to give away.

“Farmers need a sustainable water supply to ensure their livelihood. If the ground water dries up, farms will no longer be viable,” Ms Faehrmann said.

“The Government should be looking after farmers by ensuring that water is only taken at a rate that will ensure water for the future and that won’t damage the land,” Amy Hankinson, Inland Rivers Network coordinator said today.

“Water use is already too high to meet the future needs of current users and the environment – it would be unfair to both users and the environment to give more water away.

“Allocating additional water licences may provide extra irrigation water for the next year or two, but it will put future water supplies and livelihoods at risk.

“Until the Government has done a full scientific study of the Lachlan Valley aquifers and knows how much water can be safely and sustainably extracted, no more water licences should be granted,” Ms Hankinson said.

For more information:

Mithra Cox (Nature Conservation Council) 0425 351 844 or 9262 2641

Amy Hankinson (Inland Rivers Network) 0407 279 088