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## **Water slows to trickle: pressure remains**

Water in the Lachlan River is expected to stop flowing past Condobolin by the end of this week, highlighting how desperate the water situation in the region has become.

The NSW Farmers' Association says State Water has reduced the flow from Wyangala Dam to 200 megalitres, reducing the flow to the point that it will no longer pass the weir at Condobolin.

Conservation Resource Management Committee Spokesman John Ward says given this, the Government's deferral of fixed water charges to farmers in the Lachlan Valley for six months, whilst positive, obviously isn't a long term solution.

"Drought conditions in the Lachlan Valley are unprecedented, with general security water users having received zero allocation for 5 out the past 6 years," Mr Ward said.

"Fixed water charges are applied irrespective of the level of water allocation received, meaning that irrigators are still expected to pay in full the fixed charge portion of their tariff, even without a drop of water," he said.

"While a deferral of this payment for 6 months recognises the seriousness of the situation, it falls short of the Association's recommendation to suspend general security fixed water charges in the Lachlan Valley for the full 2009/10 water year," he said.

Given the widespread and ongoing nature of the drought, the Association is lobbying for a statewide policy of waiving fixed water charges altogether when Exceptional Circumstances drought conditions prevail.

"Many Members in this region are facing the burden of thousands of dollars worth of fixed water charges, on top of the multitude of other pressures drought creates," Mr Ward said.

"The NSW Water Minister the Hon Phil Costa himself has described the water situation as reaching crisis point, so we are really urging the Government to suspend a full year's deferral of fixed water charges," Mr Ward concluded.

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