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Basin Plan a risk to mental health

The NSW Farmers' Association is calling on the State and Federal Governments to urgently increase funding for mental health services in the Murray Darling Basin.

NSW Farmers' Association Rural Affairs Committee Chair Sarah Thompson is concerned about the mental health implications of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

"The Murray Darling Basin Authority's *Guide to the proposed Basin Plan* is causing stress and anxiety to many in the nation's food bowl," Ms Thompson said.

"We've already seen emotions boil over at NSW town meetings hosted by the MDBA in Deniliquin, Griffith, Narrabri and Moree," Ms Thompson said.

A survey by the NSW Farmers' Association shows 1 in 3 farmers believe the Basin Plan could force them to leave agriculture permanently.

"That would have a major impact on families and businesses, and threaten the foundation of any given community in the Basin," Ms Thompson said.

"In addition, the Stubbs report estimates 14 thousand people would lose their jobs if water allocations were cut by 25 percent.

"The Guide wants an average cut of up to 37 percent in NSW, so it's no wonder people are angry and frustrated," Ms Thompson said.

The Association expects demand for mental health services across the Basin to rise as a result of the Plan, and hopes to see funding for support services increased.

"The human impact of this Plan could be devastating and it's important Governments do everything to consider the social implications of taking more water away from farmers," Ms Thompson said.

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