

Wednesday, 3 August 2011

## Basin Plan delay no concern if balance is right

The National Irrigators' Council said today it was not concerned by a further delay to the release of the draft Murray Darling Basin Plan if it meant a better balanced outcome was the result.

NIC CEO Danny O'Brien said much was made of the need for certainty but this had to be weighed against the need to deliver a plan we can all live with.

"We all want certainty, but we don't want certain death. A Plan that resembles the Guide would mean certain damage for many rural communities that rely on irrigation, not to mention the loss of thousands of jobs and upward pressure on food prices.

"We hope the draft will look nothing like the Guide – including the headline numbers – and this delay gives more chance to deliver the balance between environmental, economic and social outcomes.

"The MDBA is right to work cooperatively with the states because ultimately they have the knowledge and background that will be necessary to implement the Plan. The delays can't go on indefinitely, but a short extension is no great cause for concern.

"The pressure must now go on the Commonwealth and Minister Tony Burke to break the bureaucratic chains that have been holding up the delivery of infrastructure programs and get on with the job.

"The patience of irrigation communities has worn very thin. Stop the delays in rolling out these crucial investments and get the money flowing. The ability of the Commonwealth to make money flow for buyback stands in stark contrast to the delays on infrastructure efficiency spending."

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