

Monday 6th August, 2012

Proposed Basin Plan Still a Solution in Search of a Problem

The National Irrigators' Council (NIC) today said the latest incarnation of the proposed Basin Plan will leave many Basin Communities feeling they have been ignored again.

NIC CEO, Tom Chesson said whilst there were some welcomed inclusions in the latest version of the proposed Basin Plan, the crocodiles lurking in the details were making support for the proposed Basin Plan difficult.

"We are disappointed that so many questions have been left unanswered by the latest version of proposed Basin Plan and much more work still needs to be completed.

"Until we see more details on how the proposed Basin Plan will actually work, what it hopes to achieve and how it will be implemented and paid for it is still a solution in search of a problem.

"The MDBA's role in developing the proposed Basin Plan is now limited and the ball is firmly in the Minister for Water, Tony Burke's court. He will have to craft a Basin Plan which is acceptable to his Parliamentary colleagues who will soon be voting on whether to accept or reject it.

"The Water Minister, The Hon. Tony Burke made it clear on the [ABC AM](#) program on the 10th of July 2012 that the proposed Basin Plan was "... still a fair way short of where I need to get to later this year, in terms of the exact final pathway for the Murray-Darling Basin plan ..." and "... there's an enormous amount of work to do, I'm not going to shy away from that at all."

Mr Chesson said NIC believes the comments made by the Chair of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia, Mr Tony Windsor in a [media release](#) issued on the 6th of July, 2012, are an accurate reflection of the current thinking of the communities in the MBD where he states;

'The Basin Plan is close to finalisation but there is still some key information that the Parliament needs before it is asked to make a final decision concerning the Plan', Chair of the Committee, Tony Windsor MP said. 'The Parliament, and the community, cannot be expected to accept a Basin Plan when it does not have the full facts before it.'

"Just as both the Minister and the cross-Party House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia believe that key details and information are missing, so too does the NIC," he said

Mr Chesson said it was concerning that key details had yet to be finalised despite five years and tens of millions of dollars having been spent, however, if the Government needs more time to get it right then so be it.

"We need this lack of information remedied before the proposed Basin Plan can be supported by the National Irrigators' Council," he said.

Tom Chesson: 0418 415597

Editors Note: Attached is an MDBA document outlining the next steps in finalising the proposed Basin Plan