

Monday 10th October, 2016

Key Northern Basin MDBA Reports Finally Released

The National Irrigators' Council (NIC) today expressed its extreme disappointment that two key reports underpinning the Northern Basin Review have been released just days before the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) Board is due to make a decision on whether it'll recommend changes to the Basin Plan.

NIC CEO, Tom Chesson said the process to date had been a shambles. The Northern Basin Review began when the Basin Plan was passed through Parliament way back in 2012, yet only now are communities privy to such key pieces of work.

["The Social and Economic report"](#) released today shows communities have already lost up to 21% of Equivalent Full Time (EFT) jobs as a direct result of the Basin Plan. With many more jobs to go if changes are not made.

"This is not acceptable," Mr Chesson said.

We welcome the honesty MDBA CEO, Phillip Glyde showed on [ABC radio](#) where he acknowledged the original modelling for the Basin Plan passed in 2012 wasn't good enough to give the localised impacts of the Basin Plan, however communities are now living the social and economic pain the Basin Plan has inflicted on them.

"For our communities, the Basin Plan isn't a model. For them it is real and it is having a very real world impact.

"We were promised that the Basin Plan would deliver a triple bottom line. Today's report highlights that if the current Basin Plan is not amended then that promise will be yet another lie.

"It is now time for the MDBA and the Parliament to apply the Western Sydney/Adelaide key seats test to the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

"If a Government policy was to result in the loss of up to 21% of the EFT jobs in Western Sydney or Adelaide it simply wouldn't go ahead.

"Just as a deliberate Government policy to cut 21% of the EFT jobs in Western Sydney or Adelaide wouldn't be unacceptable, it is not acceptable in our communities.

Mr Chesson said it wasn't surprising that communities like [Wee Waa](#) were banding together to draw a line in the sand and fight any further job losses.

"We know that so much can be done to improve environmental outcomes without the need to recover more water."

"Mitigating cold water pollution from dams, fish passage over weirs, re-snagging, managing pests and invasive species such as carp, and land management activities in the riparian zone and in wetlands are all crucial to improving environmental outcomes in the Northern Basin."

"The Authority must recommend that water recovery stops now and that governments instead turn their focus to achieving environmental outcomes in a way that protects northern communities from any further impact," Mr Chesson concluded.

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