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Which Grinch Is Under Resourcing the Basin Plan?

The National Irrigators' Council (NIC) has warned repeatedly that the future of the Nations' food bowl was resting on the implementation of Murray Darling Basin Plan and unless it was properly resourced it would become a complete shambles.

"Over \$12 billion of taxpayers funding has been allocated to recover water, yet funding to implement and manage the water recovered has been cut," NIC CEO, Tom Chesson said.

"We are in the ridiculous position of having a Basin Plan, yet no idea of how it will be funded or implemented."

"South Australia's decision to cut funding to the MDBA is not surprising, and it is a sign of things to come. We suspect Victoria and Queensland will follow in the near future."

"Given both the Government and Coalition Federally have indicated that the State Governments' can't run the Basin's Rivers and that only the Commonwealth could then they should fund the Basin Plan.

Mr Chesson said irrigators understand taxpayers' dollars are scarce and where possible existing resources should be used.

"For example we welcome the fact that the Ministerial Council is reviewing whether the Murray Darling Basin Authority is delivering services as efficiently as possible and whether some of its functions can be contracted out.

"However, we strongly believe Governments must ensure that there is adequate funding and resources in place to implement, meter and monitor the Basin Plan.

"We do not want the cost of government policy borne by MDB communities.

"Protecting and enhancing our environment is everyone's business.

"With the media and political attention already waning, there is every chance taxpayers' \$12 billion investment in water recovery will become another policy shambles," he said.

Mr Chesson said we do not want to be in a situation where Governments are announcing another 'historic' reform of the MDB in a few years' time because the implementation of this 'historic' Basin Plan was ill-thought out and under-resourced."

"It is imperative that we get it right now," he said.

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