

Monday 5th December, 2011

NIC Ready to Stand Shoulder to Shoulder with the Prime Minister

The National Irrigators' Council (NIC) said it was willing to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Prime Minister to help her full-fill her pledge to make 2012 the year of the job, however, if she is serious she will have to ask her Water Minister to send the draft MDBA Basin Plan back to the drawing board.

The CEO of the NIC, Tom Chesson said in its current form the Draft Basin Plan is a job destroyer.

“The Prime Minister’s statement on Friday that; ‘as the Party of jobs, we govern for jobs,’ is already being sorely tested by the failure of the Draft Basin Plan to deliver a triple bottom line.

“To put it simply if we don’t grow the food or fibre, the food manufacturing sector, which is the country largest, will have nothing to process and jobs will disappear.

“We agree with the Prime Minister when she stated in Wollongong on the 13th of September, 2011; ‘... nothing matters more than bringing the dignity and benefits of employment to all who want to work.’

“We want to work. We want to pay our way. We want to keep exporting food and fibre – not jobs.

“We want a Basin Plan which equally takes into account environmental, social and economic issues,” he said.

Mr Chesson said he hoped the Prime Minister may find the time in her busy schedule to come to irrigation dependent communities to explain how her Governments’ Draft Basin Plan will ‘deliver jobs, growth and fairness’.

“Irrigation communities provide real jobs and we say ‘yes to jobs, to growth, to fairness’ but if the current Draft Basin Plan is adopted many of our communities have no future,” Mr Chesson said.

“Pensioners and mums and dads are already struggling to pay the bills and taking water out of productive use as proposed by the draft Basin Plan will increase food prices, which just isn’t fair,” Mr Chesson said.

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