

Tuesday, 2 February 2010

## Irrigators' CEO visits Goulburn Valley

National Irrigators' Council CEO, Danny O'Brien, will visit the Goulburn Valley tomorrow and Thursday to meet with local irrigators and industry representatives.

Mr O'Brien said the tour was part of ongoing engagement with local irrigators and an opportunity to raise awareness of the likely impacts of the new Murray Darling Basin Plan which will be released in draft form this year.

"The Basin Plan will almost certainly see a huge amount of water re-directed to the environment and we are fighting to ensure there is balance in the decisions that are taken and that irrigators and their role in food production is not ignored.

"This will be a landmark reform that will lay the ground for irrigation in the Goulburn Valley for decades to come. We have some serious concerns about the process and the impacts on irrigators' rights.

"This trip is both about raising awareness with irrigators and hearing from them their concerns and attitudes to reform.

"Everyone is facing difficult circumstances at the moment, whether it's through ongoing drought, concerns about government policies or the likely impact of the Basin," Mr O'Brien said.

"I look forward to hearing the views of local irrigators so the NIC can better represent their interests in our dealings with government.

"Irrigation is a key economic driver in the region and we will be working to ensure it remains a viable, sustainable industry well into the future."

Mr O'Brien was appointed CEO to the NIC, which is the peak national body for irrigators, last year.

He is a former Victorian journalist and policy adviser with experience in the Goulburn Valley.

The NIC's objective is to develop projects and policies to ensure the efficiency, viability and sustainability of Australian irrigated agriculture and the security and reliability of water entitlements.