

Thursday, 10 February 2011

Committee on right track – now up to Government to act

The House of Representatives Regional Australia committee is on the right track with the interim findings handed down today on the impacts of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

The National Irrigators' Council said it was pleased that the Committee had listened to some of the key problems outlined by Basin communities and had provided early advice to the Commonwealth on issues that need to be addressed.

“A more strategic approach to water buybacks, addressing taxation issues that are hampering efforts to improve the efficiency of irrigation infrastructure and better solutions than simply overbank flows are all an important part of getting a balanced Basin Plan,” said NIC CEO Danny O'Brien.

“Chairman Tony Windsor and the members of the committee, across party lines, have clearly heard the concerns of Basin communities during their initial hearings and have taken the appropriate action.

“It is now up to the Government to respond. NIC and other organisations have been working with the Government to address a number of these issues for some time now and we are confident it has heard the message from the community and stakeholder groups.

“Now it's got the same message from the Windsor committee it should be rolling up its sleeves and getting on with it.”

Mr O'Brien said the Committee should also be making recommendations to the Government about the *Water Act* and its capacity to deliver a Basin Plan that balances environmental, economic and social factors.

“The Act has been raised by many in the community at hearings so far and it must be addressed. We look forward to the Committee making recommendations on legislative change when its final report is handed down.”

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