

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2012

## **NIC Backs Rinehart Call for Departments to be sent Bush**

The National Irrigators' Council (NIC) today strongly backed calls by Gina Rinehart for Government Departments to be decentralised out of Canberra.

The NIC's CEO, Tom Chesson said Gina Rinehart is spot on when she writes; "We need our government departments and government advisers exposed to more of Australia ...,"

"There are no practical reasons for water related departments to be located in Canberra and they should be decentralised.

"The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (the country's biggest irrigator) which owns billions of dollars worth of water entitlements, yet doesn't have one staff member located outside of Canberra is now breeding and before it grows exponentially, the Government should relocate it to the regions it operates in.

"Once a bureaucratic empire has been spawned in Canberra it is hard to relocate and just seems to get bigger and bigger and bigger sucking up taxpayers dollars like they are going out of fashion.

"Water functions within SEWPaC should also be relocated and the Government would save a fortune on rent it currently pays on prime Canberra CBD office space if the MDBA was decentralised.

"The Government and MDBA are actively advocating what it calls 'localism' to help implement its MDB Basin Plan, yet communities are demanding to know how can there be 'localism' if there is no local presence?"

"Mr Chesson it is obvious from the way the Draft MDB Plan is written the authors come from Canberra.

"Canberra, despite being in the MDB is not losing a single drop of water as a result of the MDB Plan; in fact it has been allowed to build a brand new dam twenty times larger than the one it is replacing.

"Many believe it is no coincidence that Canberra is being so well looked after by the bureaucrats writing the Basin Plan.

"Their outlook would certainly be different if they lived in the communities who currently stand to lose the most," Mr Chesson said.

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