

Friday 3rd February, 2012

NIC Begg Government Not to Listen to Green Groups and Increase Northern Basin Flood Severity or Duration

The National Irrigators' Council (NIC) today called on both the NSW and Federal Governments to immediately rule out any environmental water releases from dams in flood affected valleys in the Murray Darling Basin as proposed by green groups.

The CEO of the NIC, Tom Chesson said he was appalled that a [document](#) released by green groups is arguing that the Government create artificial flood events and increase the length and severity of floods and said this alone highlighted they were heartless and clueless.

“Communities particularly in the Gwydir and Namoi Valleys would be rightly furious if the Government deliberately released water as environmental flows over the coming weeks.

“In the flood affected communities in the Gwydir and Namoi Valleys the Government has bought over 111,000 megalitres to deliberately create overbank flows commonly known as floods.

“Stakeholders have been told that in order to create larger floods to water more wetlands, the Government will put ‘peaks’ and ‘tails’ on floods to increase their environmental benefit.

“To put it simply, if the Government deliberately released environmental water which put a metre of water through my lounge room, to say I would be far from happy would be the understatement of the year.

“Despite owning or controlling over 2.1 million megalitres of water in the Murray Darling Basin, it will be at least three years before the Government has produced an environmental watering plan for that water, in the meantime no-one has a clue what the Government is planning to do with that water.

Mr Chesson said only yesterday concerned farmers in the NSW Murray Valley hosted a visit by the Federal Minister for Water, Tony Burke to implore him not to artificially flood their homes and properties.

“We are gravely concerned the Murray Darling Basin Draft Plan does not take flood mitigation in to consideration.

“In fact the main purpose of the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder is to create floods and mimic natural events such as the floods around Moree.

“The MDB Draft Plan is all about turning 150 years of flood mitigation works on its head.

“Right now our communities are facing a natural disaster the last thing we want is for the Government to deliberately inflame the situation,” Mr Chesson said.

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