

Tuesday 10th July, 2012

Another Step on the Road to a 'Balanced' Basin Plan

The National Irrigators' Council today welcomed the MDB Ministerial Council response to the proposed Basin Plan and said it may just be possible for a Balanced Basin Plan to be developed which does not destroy jobs, increase food prices and wipe out irrigation dependent communities.

NIC CEO, Tom Chesson said today's Ministerial Council response could accurately be described as positive steps towards a workable Basin Plan.

"We are not surprised that there isn't consensus amongst the States, however we are pleased that finally we are seeing the problems with previous incarnations of the proposed Basin Plan have been acknowledged and potential solutions are now being more clearly defined.

"The NIC supports the requests made by the Ministerial Council for;

- the development of an SDL adjustment mechanism which will allow for savings been made through Environmental Works & Measures and changes to rules and river operations being able to be accounted for a way that can offset the SDL
- the need to abandon the notion of a 'shared component' in favour of fully declared recovery targets or 'apportionment' because this provides greater transparency and reduces the prospect of one State or one catchment bearing a disproportionate share of the water recovery target
- the view that a 2015 review is not needed on the basis that 2015 is far too soon to undertake a meaningful review of anything other than process

Mr Chesson said no-one was under the allusion that there weren't still crocodiles lurking in the details, however the Ministers, their Staff and Departments should be praised for trying hard to deliver a more workable plan than what was handed too them.

"Whilst the Ministerial Council has made significant progress and a 'pathway' forward is emerging it's too soon for anyone to declare that we have a 'balanced' plan which communities could live with," Mr Chesson concluded

Media Contact: Tom Chesson 0418 415597