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Recommendations hit the right note – now it's Government's turn

Recommendations from the Regional Australia committee on the proposed Murray Darling Basin Plan have been welcomed by irrigators but will mean nothing unless acted upon by Government.

The National Irrigators' Council has congratulated Chair Tony Windsor and the members of the committee across party lines for their recognition that a healthy Basin can be delivered without destroying communities and industries.

NIC CEO Danny O'Brien said the key test now is how the Government and Murray Darling Basin Authority respond.

"While we've not yet digested the full 293 pages, the recommendations are sound and reflect the views of our members and most Basin communities.

"That is, we can return water to the environment in a smarter way through investment in water saving infrastructure and environmental works and measures and a realisation that water is not the only solution.

"There also needs to be a change in the approach the Commonwealth takes to buybacks and we would be happy to discuss with the Government what might be meant by a more 'strategic' approach.

"At the very least this will entail better integration with the various infrastructure projects.

"However this is now the latest in a series of statements from our politicians that hit the right note, but we all know actions speak louder than words.

"The proof in the pudding now is how the Commonwealth and State Government's and the MDBA and the bureaucracies respond."

Mr O'Brien said irrigators were cautious about the need to establish new bureaucracies but would be prepared to discuss this further with the Government.

"We do think there can be great improvements in the process but whether it is necessary to create new and potentially costly bureaucracies is another thing.

"We look forward to working with Ministers' Burke and Crean and their departments to implement these recommendations."

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