



National Irrigators' Council

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National Irrigators' Council Call for Action

The National Irrigators' Council is calling on the Federal Senate not to get distracted by talk of inquiries and to focus on acting now to minimise the uncertainty in irrigation communities.

National Irrigators' Council (NIC) CEO, Tom Chesson said the Council would not support a Senate inquiry into the Murray Darling Basin Plan at this time when there are other, more immediate actions that can be taken to address issues of real concern for irrigators.

Mr Chesson said rather than another inquiry it would be far better for the Senate to quickly pass the Government's proposed Legislation to cap water buybacks at 1500 gegalitres.

"There is nothing strategic about how buybacks have been undertaken to date and it causes more pain to communities than necessary. We would be profoundly disappointed if this Legislation was shelved whilst there was yet another Inquiry.

"As well as the cap legislation there are 23 recommendations and 30 conclusions from the Water Act review that we would be more than happy to discuss with Senators.

"We certainly welcome the interest of cross-bench Senators in issues relating to the implementation of the Basin Plan and note that Senator Madigan is the only Senator from outside the Basin who has actually seriously engaged with irrigators in our communities since the Basin Plan was passed by Parliament in 2011.

"But right now it is not inquiries we need, it is action. We don't need more reports telling us what we already know."

Mr Chesson said it's no secret that a series of parliamentary inquiries into water reform over recent years have not delivered greater certainty for irrigators nor have they improved the social and economic wellbeing of Basin communities.

"We would like to see the political class start implementing practical, useful and tangible outcomes for our communities.

"If Senators would like a greater understanding of how the cap and some of the Water Act review recommendations can improve the way the Basin plan is being implemented we are more than happy to have that discussion.

"If they want to visit the Basin and understand why communities are still concerned, we are happy to show them anytime they wish.

"In a nutshell we need tangible outcomes so our communities can get on with the job of producing food and fibre for the nation; not another Senate Inquiry," Mr Chesson concluded.

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