

New CEO for the National Irrigators' Council

The Chairman of the National Irrigators' Council, Stewart Ellis today announced the appointment of new CEO, Tom Chesson saying he was joining the organisation at a crucial time.

"Tom Chesson is joining the National Irrigators' Council (NIC) at a time communities in the Murray Darling Basin are trying to recover from the worst drought on record, only to be facing the very real prospect of being forced back into a government made drought.

"Mr Chesson has a broad background working as an adviser on agriculture issues at a State, Federal and International level and is well aware of the issues facing food and fibre producers around Australia."

Mr Ellis thanked outgoing CEO Danny O'Brien for the passion and energy he brought to representing the concerns of the 33 member groups who make up the NIC. Mr O'Brien is moving overseas for family reasons.

Mr Chesson said having grown up on a mixed farming property in the Bogan Shire in far western NSW he was very aware of the importance of water to farming communities.

"We are now at the business end of what has been a long process and based on the numbers 'leaked' to the media, whole communities are at risk in the MDB.

"We know a bad Basin Plan will cost thousands of jobs, force up food prices and threaten family farms are regional communities"

"The Murray Darling Basin Authority has already admitted there are major gaps in the science underpinning the plan. In reality any decision on the amount of water taken from communities will be a political one.

"Throughout the MDB there are many very worried people who having survived the worst drought could throw at them, are not going to be intimidated into supporting a bad Basin Plan.

"Basin communities will settle for a workable, deliverable, practical, value for money plan. Australia simply cannot afford the alternative.

"As I travel around the basin I have been overwhelmed by how well the country has recovered from the worst drought on record. Wetlands are booming and the frogs are in full voice.

"Our food and fibre producers are the best in the world. I look forward to representing their interests in this critical discussion and on many other water related policy decisions into the future," Mr Chesson said.

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