

Wednesday 9th October, 2013

Draft Constraints Management Strategy Lacking Substance

The National Irrigators' Council said it was disappointed that after six years and millions of dollars the MDBA was only able to produce a 'work in progress' as its draft Constraints Management Strategy (CMS).

NIC CEO, Tom Chesson said the draft document released today was grossly inadequate especially given it was meant to provide guidance for the investment of another \$1.77 billion.

"The MDBA says 'a constraint is something that stops us from delivering environmental water as effectively as we could', we call constraints homes, towns, and businesses.

"Similarly constraints include environmental assets like the worlds' largest river red gum forests which would be drowned if too much water is forced through the Barmah Choke."

Mr Chesson said after six years, countless meetings and tens of millions of dollars developing the Basin Plan it is not unreasonable for Basin communities to expect our Government to know where the local constraints are; how they can be removed (if possible), how much it would cost to remove them and what the third party impacts would be."

"All sides of politics passed the Basin Plan through Parliament and claim to know how much water is needed to be recovered for a healthy river system, surely these same Politicians must know whether the water can actually be delivered, how it will be delivered, where it will be delivered and under what circumstances it will be delivered?"

"From the release of draft CMS it is dubious whether the politicians have listen to locals and really understand the complexity of the task confronting them."

"For too long the Basin Plan has been relying on computer models which can easily be manipulated to provide a political outcome by simply changing or making up assumptions."

"The natural environment isn't a computer model and the Commonwealth and State Government already have hundreds of thousands of megalitres of environmental water which needs to be delivered each year."

"We don't have the luxury of time. Already there are major third party impacts occurring as a direct result of environmental watering events," he said.

Mr Chesson said many communities were sick and tired of the having to explain local constraints to the people from 'Canberra', however, given peoples' lives, livelihoods and the environment could be severely damaged if the CMS is half baked it is important they saddle up (again) and participate in yet another round of consultations.

The MDBA has announced meetings will be held in;

Mildura

When: Monday 14 October, 12:30-2pm

Where: Quality Hotel Mildura Grand
Seventh Street, Mildura

Renmark

When: Monday 14 October, 3-5pm

Where: Renmark Club
160 Murray Avenue, Renmark

Shepparton

When: Tuesday 15 October, 3-4:30pm

Where: Function Room 2, Eastbank Centre
70 Welsford Street, Shepparton

Deniliquin

When: Thursday 17 October, 12-1:30pm

Where: Gallery Room, Deniliquin RSL
72 End Street, Deniliquin

Feedback and submission to the MDBA are due by the 30th of October and if you can't make one of the meetings the MDBA can be contacted by calling 1800 260 067.

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