

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2012

## The Basin Plan is now about Trust

The Basin Plan has failed to legally protect communities from the 'downsides' of water back-backs, and communities will have to put their trust in the goodwill of politicians, the CEO of the National Irrigators' Council, (NIC) Tom Chesson said today.

"NIC has repeatedly asked the Government to back up its own acknowledgement 'you do get downsides for the local communities' from general tender water buy-backs by legislating a cap on future water buy backs," Mr Chesson said.

"The Government has refused to do this and instead is asking communities to trust them and future Government's.

"We all know that today's good political intentions can dissipate overnight and yet that's ultimately what we are being asked to live with."

"We note the Coalition Leader has made it clear to 15,000 people in Griffith that the Coalition will not support a 'bad' Basin Plan.

"We therefore ask the Coalition to honour this promise by guaranteeing if they do get into Government it will legislate to stop all water buy-backs and to recover water only in a way which does not have a social and economic 'downside' for Basin communities," he said.

"Basin communities are sick and tired of never ending 'historic' water reforms being thrust upon them and the release of the (final?) Basin Plan must provide some certainty that we won't be embarking on yet another 'historic' reform whenever we have a drought."

"We believe that just adding water will not solve the environmental problems within the Basin but in the final analysis this Plan and the debate that has preceded it has been almost entirely about the water recovery target with social and economic impacts pushed well to the rear."

"Basin States will now be handed the challenge of trying to implement what is at the moment a concept rather than a plan and it will be in the process of implementation that the limitations of the arrangements announced today will be fully revealed."

"Australian taxpayers should also ready themselves for the likelihood of having to be asked to dig deeper to fund more studies, more research and more consultants in an effort to plug the gaps that inevitably will be revealed."

"The sad thing is that with a little more effort and a little less grandstanding from some politicians a decent plan was within the nation's grasp but once again political expediency has prevailed over long term interest."

"NIC will consider the detail of the plan, and consult with its members, in the coming days, before deciding whether or not to seek Parliamentary disallowance," Mr Chesson said.

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