

Failed Basin Plan – fix required, Minister

Farmer and irrigator groups across the Basin today united in their rejection of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's revised Basin Plan.

“It beggars belief that after 20 weeks of consultation where communities across the Basin implored the Authority to deliver a more balanced Plan, there has been little substantive change,” National Farmers’ Federation (NFF) CEO Matt Linnegar said.

“We have said from the start that this Plan should be about outcomes and not numbers, however what we have been delivered does not provide a clear picture on outcomes for the environment or communities.

“Worse still the means of getting to the prescribed number remains a blunt instrument and unless there is a significant and immediate shift in emphasis towards infrastructure and management solutions, the Plan will bite deep for communities and families across the Basin.

“While the States must speak up for their constituents, only the Federal Government and the Parliament can fix this. Critical to this is how the Basin Plan will be implemented.

“The focus now must be on the recovery of water through non-purchase mechanisms including infrastructure and efficiency measures throughout the delivery system and on-farm environmental works and measures, river operations and smarter ways to deliver environmental outcomes that minimise the future impacts to the Basin’s community.

“If Minister Burke and the Government fail to get this policy right, then the future of Australia’s food bowl and Basin communities are in jeopardy,” concluded Mr Linnegar.

This release is a joint statement from the NFF, National Irrigators Council, AgForce Queensland, Queensland Farmers’ Federation, NSW Irrigators Council, NSW Farmers Association, Victorian Farmers’ Federation, Australian Dairy Farmers, Cotton Australia and the Ricegrowers’ Association of Australia.

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