



12 July 2010

Basin Plan – “Get on with it!”

The NSW Irrigators Council is frustrated at the lack of commitment from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to a date on which the Basin Plan will be released.

Council Chief Executive Officer Andrew Gregson says that people are frustrated at the unwillingness of the Authority to simply name a date for the release.

“People in the Basin are worried about their jobs, their families and their future. This sword of Damocles has been held over them for too long.

“The Draft Plan was to be released in July. The MDBA didn’t complete the work in time, so they’ve announced that they’ll provide a ‘guide to the Basin Plan’ in August.

“But MDBA Chief Executive Rob Freeman won’t commit to a date for that release. **He’s now telling us that they’ll reconsider even releasing the ‘guide’ if an election is called.**

Gregson says that this smacks of political involvement which is, he contends, entirely inappropriate.

“The whole theory of the MDBA was an independent assessment. If the release of a Plan that will directly affect jobs, businesses, towns and families is to be determined by political events, then the Plan is clearly political itself.

“Name a date, Rob – and stick to it. If you’re really independent, then the election has nothing to do with it.

“If you won’t, we’ll assume you’re acting in concert with politicians to suppress information about the possible job losses and increased food prices that a poor policy process might well deliver.”

ENDS

For further information:

Andrew Gregson, Chief Executive

Office: 02 9251 8466 Mobile: 0416 88 44 68