



20 July 2010

## NSW Irrigators “Unsurprised” at Plan Delay

The NSW Irrigators Council is unsurprised that the Murray-Darling Basin Authority has today announced that the release of the Basin Plan will be delayed until after the election.

Council Chief Executive Officer Andrew Gregson says the move confirms what productive water users have known all along.

“This process is political. It’s as simple as that,” he said.

The MDBA claimed that the move was “consistent with election caretaker period conventions.” Analysis of the Guidance on Caretaker Conventions issued by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet shows no evidence of such a requirement or, indeed, consistency.

“We understand entirely that a politician would not want a Plan that will cost thousands of jobs, dislocate thousands of people, send hundreds of businesses over the edge and send the price of food skyrocketing to be released.

“That’s exactly why the MDBA have deferred the release of this Plan – they are fundamentally operating in a political environment. Their decision to defer release of the Plan on grounds that are at best spurious shows that they are operating in a political fashion.

**“Under no circumstances can the Basin Plan now be described as independent. This is a political document that its political masters must answer for.”**

ENDS

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*Approved: CT and ML*