



NSW IRRIGATORS' COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

26 July 2010

Basin Plan Freedom of Information Demand

The NSW Irrigators Council isn't accepting the decision of the Murray Darling Basin Authority to delay the release of the Basin Plan because of the Federal Election.

Council Chief Executive Officer Andrew Gregson says the recent decision of the Authority to delay the release of the Plan is political and is therefore inappropriate.

"If the Authority is independent of politics, then a political event such as an election ought have absolutely nothing to do with its activities.

The Council has lodged a request under Freedom of Information laws to obtain access to the Plan Guide

"The information in that Plan affects people's lives. It isn't just farmers – it's the local businesses that survive in local communities that will suffer as well. They deserve to know what their future is – and they aren't happy about a political decision to delay telling them.

"This information should be freely available. It shouldn't be held behind a political wall. This is exactly what Freedom of Information laws are about and that's why we have lodged the request.

Gregson says the Council has also requested the legal advice that the Authority claims to have obtained to delay the release of the Plan.

"We don't believe that there is any legal impediment to the release of the Plan – and we suspect that the advice provided to the Authority says exactly that.

"If the Authority refuses to release that advice, we'll regard it as proof positive that the delayed release is entirely political – and we'll hold politicians responsible for the likely massive impact that the Basin Plan will have on family farms and local communities."

ENDS

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