

Greens and Labor smash basin plan commitment

The National Irrigators Council (NIC) says a decision by Labor to back a disallowance motion rushed on by the Greens tomorrow in the Senate will be a major blow to rural communities in Northern NSW and Southern Qld – as well as to the basin plan overall.

NIC CEO Steve Whan said “I am appalled that a decision that will cost more than 100 rural families their livelihoods has been made with so little regard for the people involved or for the basin plan overall.

“Communities have every right to be outraged that after years of work and scrutiny, a thorough and independent process could be tossed out by a Greens determination to politically wedge Labor before it can reach any agreement with the Government.

“Let’s be absolutely clear. The Northern Basin review was a commitment as part of the basin plan introduced by Labor in 2012 and every State Government (including the current South Australian premier) agreed.

“The Northern Basin has been put through an extensive and independent review, the recommendations didn’t do everything irrigators or environmentalists wanted but they did provide the opportunity for certainty.

“Disallowing this amendment is a cruel blow for the communities affected. But, it also stops progress on protecting environmental flows and on introducing complementary environmental measures

“We’ve always known that the Greens want to smash the basin plan. The Greens objective in bringing this debate on tomorrow is not to solve problems it is to smash the plan. The Greens might get a political win tomorrow but the basin loses a chance to get better environmental outcomes.

“I note Labor is not saying they are opposed altogether to the Northern Basin amendments but I am disgusted that after months of these being on the table specific concerns have not been discussed and resolved.”

Media Contact: Steve Whan 0429 780 883
Tuesday 6 February 2018