

Media Release



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Basin Plan to Fall Short on Triple Bottom Line

For immediate release

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The Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF) has serious doubts whether the Federal Government and Murray-Darling Basin Authority will deliver on their triple bottom line promises for the draft Basin Plan.

Daryl Hoey, ADF water spokesman said, "In recent meetings with government and the MDBA they certainly haven't convinced us that the draft Basin Plan is going to allow for a growing dairy industry to operate across the Basin.

"Yet the Federal Water Minister, Tony Burke, promised more than a year ago to deliver a Basin Plan that optimised economic, social and environmental outcomes.

"At the time, the dairy industry accepted these commitments in good faith - only to discover now, at this late stage, that the MDBA has not incorporated the triple bottom line into the draft Basin Plan after all."

"The MDBA's own analysis has identified that achieving its water recovery target through continued buybacks would cause severe and lasting decline in irrigation regions.

"With the breaking of the drought, the dairy industry is recovering, rebuilding herds, increasing milk production and reducing debt. If the proposed water reductions go ahead, then the dairy industry will slide back to where it was during the drought.

"Mooted alternatives such as dryland beef farming will not replace the lost jobs, local dairy processing and economic activity associated with irrigation farming," said Mr Hoey.

Chris Griffin, ADF President said, "Farmers across the Basin have achieved considerable water savings and made substantial contributions to future environmental water through the buyback scheme and other projects.

Further buyback tenders are unnecessary when more water can be saved by increased investment in more water-efficient irrigation systems, environmental works to better use the available water, and improved river operations."

"Given the amount of water already recovered and the clear economic and social impacts of this change, the dairy industry calls on the Federal Government to make a firm commitment to stop taking our irrigation water," said Mr Griffin.

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