



## New Chief but process still flawed

Queensland peak farm group AgForce has urged new Murray Darling Basin Authority chair Craig Knowles to 'put his money where his mouth is', after he committed to balance in the lead-up to the release of the Draft Murray Darling Basin Plan.

AgForce south east water spokesman and Dalby farmer Kim Bremner said AgForce will continue to call for a delay to the release of the Murray Darling Basin Draft Plan until the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) can get the science right.

"AgForce stands by the Queensland Government's Water Resource Plans and believes no further cuts are needed in Queensland," Mr Bremner said.

"It is frustrating to go through 10 years of water planning in the Queensland Murray Darling Basin, only to see the process revisited at a Federal level before the true impact of the State's water resource plans is known.

"We accept the Queensland government's assessment of water availability in the catchment and the subsequent modelling and allocations. The current allocations in Queensland are sustainable in the long-term as per the requirements of the Queensland Water Act.

"While AgForce is pleased to see a leader like Mr Knowles on the MDBA who wishes to balance good environmental outcomes, good social outcomes and strong economies for rural and regional Australia, we will continue to call on the Authority to delay the release of the draft plan until they can get the modelling and consultation processes correct."

"The Murray Darling Basin generates 39% of national income derived from agricultural production – it simply is too precious to the Australian population and our economy to meddle in without the proper modelling," Mr Bremner said.

Mr Bremner said with the massive flooding recently experienced in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, it is the wrong time to be putting irrigators under further stress due to government policy.

"AgForce has made submissions to the Senate, House of Representatives and the Proposed Guide to the Murray Darling Basin Plan repeating our calls for the MDBA to correct the modelling underpinning the plan, before introducing legislation that has the potential to ruin regional communities.

"While there is no immediate environmental risk to the basin due to the flooding, we call on the Federal government to delay the implementation of the plan for three years so that irrigators and communities are afforded the chance to recover from these devastating events and for the Authority to take the time to get the science and modelling right on decisions that will affect the lives and livelihoods of regional Australians.

"AgForce has participated in the consultation process with the MDBA and will monitor the situation to ensure the lifeblood of rural and regional communities is protected in a fair and balanced way."

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