

Media Release



Victorian
Farmers
Federation

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Federal Labor snubs Basin farmers

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) says Federal Water Minister Tanya Plibersek is continuing to ignore farmers.

VFF Water Council Chair Andrew Leahy said despite multiple attempts by the VFF to meet with the Commonwealth, Minister Plibersek's key water adviser and Murray Darling Basin Authority staff were in Shepparton yesterday, but did not meet farmers.

"There is no group more impacted by the Basin Plan than farmers and the Commonwealth has chosen to ignore us."

"Farmers are central to the discussion around water in the Murray Darling Basin. It's completely unacceptable that despite multiple attempts to open discussion with decision makers, farmers continue to be ignored."

"It's a slap in the face when we've previously invited the Minister to Northern Victoria and also offered to fly to Canberra to meet with her and discuss concerns with the Basin Plan," Mr Leahy said.

"The VFF is the peak and largest farm lobby in Victoria. We have been working on the Basin Plan for over 12 years and have real solutions to offer as we enter the final stages of the Plan," Mr Leahy said.

Mr Leahy added further concerns regarding Federal Labor's apparent lack of interest in how the Basin Plan is impacting farmers.

"We thought the Federal Government would have been keen to understand how their decision to buy back water would drive up costs for farmers and the potential flow-on impacts for food prices."

"Farmers have long been saying the impacts on the region have been severe and we now have independent research to support this. The Victorian Government's recent look at the socio-economic impacts of the Plan in the Southern Basin has found that water buybacks for the 450GL and any shortfall could result in a \$900 million loss in the value of agriculture across the Southern Basin."

"The Federal Government cannot ignore the facts of this reputable report and we won't accept the consequences for farmers."

"The VFF is requesting an urgent meeting so the Commonwealth can hear firsthand from farmers about the Basin Plan."

"Farmers need a seat at the table and our voices heard. The opportunity to meet and discuss is still on offer, the ball is in their court," Mr Leahy said.

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