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## **Basin Chair quits – better planning needed for Murray Darling**

The NSW Farmers' Association hopes the resignation of Murray Darling Basin Authority Chair Michael Taylor will lead to a restructure of the Basin Plan process.

NSW Farmers' Association President Charles Armstrong says Mr Taylor's statements today reveal the policy confusion troubling the Authority, and explain why the Basin Planning process has been so disappointing to regional communities.

"Mr Taylor has identified fundamental problems with the way the Basin Plan is being approached," Mr Armstrong said.

Federal Water Minister, Tony Burke, has confirmed the Government's commitment to delivering a Basin Plan that balances social, economic and environmental outcomes, which is most welcome. However, Mr Taylor said today that the Authority, as it is currently constituted and under the current Act, can't deliver this.

"The MDBA has not really been planning in any true sense of the word – it has simply identified end-of-system environmental targets with the expectation that the States will do the collaborative planning needed to achieve these targets at some later date" Mr Armstrong said.

"Minister Burke now has the opportunity to correct this. We want to see the practical detail of how the planning process will now proceed and how it will be resourced and administered.

"A huge body of technical work needs to be done at local level to get the detail of the Plan right and this must be connected up across State and Federal jurisdictions.

"The MDBA can play a valuable partnership and coordination role with the Basin States in developing new water sharing plans as subsets of an integrated Basin Plan," he said.

"Local communities need to be engaged and provided resources to help them identify and design irrigation efficiencies, environmental watering plans and restructuring plans. This is the only pathway to a truly sustainable Basin Plan," Mr Armstrong concluded.

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