

Wednesday 13 October 2010

PR/190/10

FARMERS LOCKED OUT

The NSW Farmers' Association has labelled the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) public consultation process a farce, after thousands of people were turned away from today's Community Information Session in Deniliquin.

NSW Farmers' Association Vice President Fiona Simson is concerned farmers and regional residents are being silenced, in what should be a transparent process.

"You can't call this a Community Information Session when only the first 1000 people to arrive are crammed inside," Mrs Simson said.

"How does the MDBA expect to hear the concerns of thousands of others from behind a closed door?"

"The turn out shows rural and regional residents are worried about how damaging the proposed Plan could be to their future livelihoods," Mrs Simson said.

The Association is concerned the MDBA is ignoring the desire of local communities to play a role in developing the proposed Murray Darling Basin Plan.

"This issue is snowballing, and I'm calling on Federal Water Minister Tony Burke to take the lead on this issue," Mrs Simson said.

"Minister Burke has the power to order the MDBA to approach the Plan paying equal emphasis to the social and economic consequences - as well as the environment.

"If today is any indication, tomorrow's meetings in Griffith will be huge. It's imperative the MDBA ensure it can cater for an expected crowd of thousands.

"I'm urging everyone who can; to attend their nearest Community Information Session, and not be deterred by today's lock out!" Mrs Simson said.

Contact: Olivia Suzanski (Media Officer) 0429 990 218

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