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Media Release

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Coal Valley decision correct but Government could have averted the crisis

The Tasmanian Conservation Trust today applauded the Premier David Bartlett for intervening to provide sensible short and medium term solutions for the water crisis in the Coal River Valley.

“While the Premier has acted decisively and sensibly in the Coal River water crisis, this has only been necessary because the State Government has ignored the Coal Valley up to recently”, TCT spokesperson Peter McGlone said today.

“The Premier has had to step in to deal with a crisis that could have been avoided. Farmers have a right to ask why the Government’s \$220 million dollar *Drought-proofing Tasmania Program* has not included any investment in the Coal Valley?” said Mr McGlone.

The TCT supports well planned off-stream dams and pipelines, such as those announced by the Premier, that assist farmers in traditional irrigation areas. “This is the direction the government must take with irrigation rather than putting hundreds of millions of dollars of tax-payers money into grandiose schemes such as piping water to the southern Midlands and building dams in the north-east where farmers have never irrigated” said Mr McGlone.

Mr Bartlett is on track giving his support for an ‘off-stream’ storage dam in the Coal Valley. “If dams must be built then off-stream dams are much preferable to the many environmentally destructive in-stream dams the government is proposing for the St Pauls River, Boobyalla River, Great Forester River and others.”

While the Premier is taking the lead on irrigation he should get his Minister for Planning David Llewellyn to stop dragging his feet over establishment of the planning process for the major irrigation pipelines.

“While the Irrigation Development Board have called for tenders for pipes for the Derwent to Coal Valley pipeline, the planning process to be established by the State Government is not even in place yet.”

“Minister Llewellyn made a public statement on 1 December 2008 that he expected the Planning Directive For the Assessment of Major Irrigation Pipelines to have gone out for public comment before Christmas and still we see no sign of it.”

Further information:

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