



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **BASIN PLAN – ANOTHER STEP AHEAD**

Today's release of the Guide to the Proposed Murray-Darling Basin Plan is a significant step towards restoring the health of the iconic Murray Darling Basin and securing the long-term wellbeing of communities dependent on a genuinely sustainable river system, according to the Inland Rivers Network

“No one benefits from the current impoverished state of the once great rivers and wetlands of the Murray Darling. Water affected by salinity, acidity and other pollutants is not good for people, crops, fish or waterbirds,” Inland Rivers Network representative Bev Smiles said today.

“The Inland Rivers Network supports the Basin Plan as the best framework to plan the ecological restoration of the degraded water-deprived Murray-Darling Basin.

“Water extractions should be returned to an ecologically sustainable footing to benefit the health of the Basin's river systems and the resilience of the communities that rely on them for economic activity.

IRN will be working to help people use the opportunities outlined in the Guide. The range of options for environmental improvement need to be closely considered.

“This essential halt to the over-extraction of water must go hand-in-hand with structural adjustment that assists rural and regional communities in adapting to sustainable water allocations.

“The Basin Plan provides a unique opportunity for protecting and restoring the rich natural wonders of the Murray Darling system, while helping rural and regional communities with the social and economic adjustment needed for them to survive and thrive.

“We look forward to working with the Murray Darling Basin Authority, state and federal governments and other stakeholders on developing a Basin Plan that is scientifically robust and ecologically sustainable,” Ms Smiles said.

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The Inland Rivers Network (IRN) is a coalition of environment groups and individuals working for the long term health of all rivers, wetlands, floodplains and billabongs within the Murray Darling Basin.