



MEDIA RELEASE
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VISION FOR A HEALTHY BASIN DRAINING AWAY

Inland Rivers Network concerns that the opportunity to secure a healthy future for the Murray-Darling Basin through the Basin Plan are draining away have been intensified as reports that the Murray-Darling Basin Authority is considering proposals for returning much lower volumes than the environment requires have emerged.

Yesterday Craig Knowles, Chair of the Basin Authority, tried to emphasise the role that environmental science has played in developing the proposed volumes that will form part of the draft Murray-Darling Basin Plan. However, other media has reported that the MDBA is looking at returning 2800 gigalitres per year of water to the environment, a figure far below what the best available science has shown is required for a sustainable Basin, says the Inland Rivers Network.

“In order to secure the health of the environmental assets in the NSW part of the Basin alone, which includes incredibly precious places like the Macquarie Marshes and the Central Murray red gum forests, more than 2800 gigalitres of water is needed” Inland Rivers Network Coordinator Emma Hollows said.

“The best available science shows that 4000 gigalitres per year is the minimum volume of water required to keep the Murray-Darling river systems functioning – and people living in the Basin and communities on the coast all need them to function” stated Emma Hollows.

“In order to achieve the ecological outcomes as Minister Tony Burke insists we need to, we can’t ignore that a minimum floor volume of water is required to deliver them. These outcomes are essential to underpin the longterm sustainability and productivity of Basin communities and all of us that depend on them.”

“Not only will a Basin Plan with a 2800 gigalitre figure fail to meet the watering requirements of environmental assets across NSW and the Basin, the failure to achieve the needed outcomes will also mean a massive waste of the \$10 billion of taxpayers money which a bipartisan government committed to achieve this important reform.”

The Inland Rivers Network and other environment, community and farming groups are calling for a return of at least 4000 gigalitres of water to keep the Basin systems healthy for the long term.

For comment:
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