



MEDIA RELEASE
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Infrastructure improvements alone will not return healthy flows to Murray Darling

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW and Inland Rivers Network have welcomed the many of the recommendations of the House of Representatives committee report into the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

However, the conservation groups believe further investment in water infrastructure must be complemented by an effective, voluntary scheme of water buybacks to return the Murray Darling river system to good health.

Inland Rivers Network, President, Anne Reeves said, "There's significant risk that the balance of the final Basin Plan may rely too heavily on spending millions of dollars on expensive water infrastructure projects without any guarantee they will deliver essential flows back to the environment.

"Voluntary water buybacks are a good investment that has provided an effective means of making water available for the river system in a timely and cost-effective way. We simply can't afford to turn the tap off on this crucial source of water for the Murray Darling, its wetlands and floodplains.

"Given the rapid response needed to the Murray Darling crisis, voluntary buybacks are more effective than drawn out infrastructure modifications which carry high cost born by the taxpayer and risk enshrining inappropriate irrigation ventures if not meticulously appraised on ground," she said.

Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Chief Executive Officer, Pepe Clarke said, "A vital opportunity exists in coming years for improving the health of the Murray Darling River system, and the communities and industries dependent on its wellbeing. Let's not lock out the sellers willing to put real water back into the river right now by slowing down or halting voluntary buybacks," he said.

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