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Media Release

CALL FOR MINISTERS TO AVOID KNEE JERK REACTIONS TO WATER CRISIS

The Inland Rivers Network has called for the Prime Minister and Premiers to ensure that the Water Summit focuses on how to meet commitments to address overuse and over-extraction so that regional communities and rivers will survive in the long term.

In a letter to all Premiers and the Commonwealth Inland Rivers Network Coordinator Amy Hankinson stated that,

"-The protection of regional communities and agriculture on our inland rivers is dependant on a healthy river system."

"We need long term solutions and action to fix our parched rivers and help regional communities – its time the States and Commonwealth got on with the job," stated Ms Hankinson.

"Redressing the water imbalance will revive inland communities, as many people have *already* been suffering for years from too much water being drained from the rivers, particularly upstream. It will also mean more water for downstream towns in western NSW and in SA."

Many of our wetlands and trees are also in crisis as too much water has been taken from the rivers – it is not simply a symptom of the drought. Their 'bread and butter flows' have been taken for years, which has meant that environment could not 'drought-proof' itself as it was always done."

Inland Rivers Network also requested that Queensland be invited to attend the Summit.

"Queensland is a major player within the Murray Darling system and must be involved when we are talking about managing the Murray Darling into the future. Water use in south west QLD already has major consequences for other communities and landholders in the Darling system."

Ms Hankinson concluded with a plea not to make decisions with bad consequences in the long term.

"IRN requests that you ensure rivers and wetland are not bled dry through a short term reaction to the drought exacerbated by a legacy of poor water management and climate change."

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