



Tuesday 16 October

MEDIA RELEASE: Rivers and environment short-changed again

The Inland Rivers Network is calling on the NSW Government to fix up its draft water plan for the Border Rivers in order to give the environment its fair share of water, following the closing of public comment on the draft water sharing plan.

“Currently the plan contains only a very small volume of water for the environment with heavy restrictions imposed on it, meaning the water will not be able to reach key areas of high environmental value, including some located within National Parks,” said Amy Hankinson, Coordinator of the Inland Rivers Network.

“Flows in the Border Rivers area have also been cut by over 40% on average – an amount that we know leads to a sick environment, already seen in the area and downstream in the Darling, which depends on key flows from the Border Rivers for survival.”

“This is simply not good enough – if we are going to fix the problem in the Murray Darling Basin we need strong leadership and planning that puts our rivers back on track, said Ms Hankinson.

“Responsible leadership is needed to get the right balance and planning in place now. “

“It is unacceptable to allow the planning process to drag on and leave inevitable upheaval to occur in a few years time through the National Plan for Water Security or other processes. Changes need to be made so that people can properly plan for the future knowing where they stand.”

IRN calls for the plan to be adjusted to give the environment its fair share of water and to make sure all highly valuable wetlands and floodplains can get the water they need to survive, as well as ensuring that the environmental water has rights equal to those given to irrigators.

“The NSW Government must also make sure it takes the CSIRO hydrology report, soon to be released, into account to make sure the environment isn’t further short-changed. It would not be responsible to allocate water that may no longer be available.”

“This adds insult to injury following the Queensland proposal in their draft water plan to auction off a further 5 billion litres of water in their part of the Border Rivers, despite the fact that there is already far too much water taken from the system.”

The Border Rivers are one of biggest sources of water for the Darling, providing 20% on average. The Darling provides key flows for the Lower Murray and South Australia, providing up to 40% of flows at times.

For more information contact Amy Hankinson on 0407 279 088 or 8270 9904