



MEDIA RELEASE

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Environmental water being stolen from the Macquarie Marshes

The Inland Rivers Network today released an investigative report about the theft of environmental water from the Macquarie Marshes.

"Our investigations show certain landholders have siphoned off water that was released from the Burrendong Dam specifically for the thirsty Macquarie Marshes," said IRN coordinator Amy Hankinson.

"These wetlands are already dying for a drink – it's tragic when the small amount of water allocated to them is stolen.

"Governments have not done enough to clamp down on environmental water theft; it is still happening."

Winter rain has meant small flows are reaching the Marshes, but IRN has been advised by people in the area that water thieves have again been active in recent weeks.

Ms Hankinson said ongoing water management issues in NSW were also hindering the flow of environmental water to the Marshes, making life difficult for the many species that need a healthy wetland to survive.

"We have been told some irrigators have been allowed to extract water from streams flowing into the Macquarie River below the Burrendong Dam, contrary to legislative requirements that this water must meet environmental needs before it is available for irrigation," Ms Hankinson said.

The Australian Conservation Foundation said the Commonwealth Government should ensure its national water plan is broad enough to tackle the problem of environmental water theft.

"If the Prime Minister's national water plan is going to succeed in bringing our rivers and wetlands back to health, it must have the capacity to protect environmental flows and stamp out the theft of water earmarked for the environment," said ACF healthy rivers campaigner Dr Arlene Buchan.

Contact:

Amy Hankinson (IRN) 0407 279 088

Josh Meadows (ACF) 0439 342 992