



## MEDIA RELEASE

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# Opportunities to deliver 'Wetlands for our Future'

A new report shows that successive state and federal governments have failed to protect the Murray-Darling Basin's internationally recognised wetlands.

The report, *Wetlands for our Future: Meeting national and international wetland commitments in the Murray-Darling Basin*, was released today by the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Inland Rivers Network, ahead of next week's Ramsar Convention on Wetlands meeting.

"Strong leadership is needed to turn things around for our rivers and wetlands to ensure they are healthy for future generations and can support our iconic wildlife into the future," said IRN coordinator Amy Hankinson, who will be attending next week's convention in South Korea.

The report calls on the Federal Government to initiate a National Wetlands Initiative to integrate wetlands management with Basin-wide water management processes and renew Australia's commitment to the Ramsar Convention.

"As dire as the situation is for our wetlands, Minister Wong and Minister Garrett have a unique opportunity to take decisive action that would yield dramatic benefits," Ms Hankinson said.

"New mechanisms for protecting nationally and internationally important wetlands can be integrated seamlessly and effectively into the Government's existing planning arrangements under the *Water Act 2007* and the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*.

"Next week, when Australia stands up before the world at the Ramsar convention meeting in South Korea, the Government must be frank about the crisis facing our wetlands and emphasise solutions that are available and will make a difference, like an immediate buy-back of water – 30 to 60 gigalitres for the Coorong, as shown by the recent Senate Inquiry – and a National Wetlands Initiative."

The ACF-IRN paper can be viewed at: [www.acfonline.org.au/rivers](http://www.acfonline.org.au/rivers)

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