



MEDIA RELEASE

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Rivers, wetlands and water users paying dearly for floodplain harvesting

Today's visit by the Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Water, Malcolm Turnbull, to parched areas in the Lower Balonne will again highlight the damage being done to the environment by floodplain harvesting according to the Inland Rivers Network.

"Floodplain harvesting – the practice of collecting or capturing water flowing across floodplains – is creating a whole new collection of stressed rivers as well as exacerbating existing problems for the environment and other water users that rely on healthy ecosystems," said IRN Coordinator, Amy Hankinson.

"Rivers and wetlands that were once thriving are now dying for a drink because a few thirsty landholders like Cubbie Station are taking more than their fair share of water.

"It's good the Federal Parliamentary Secretary will get to see with his own eyes the impact floodplain harvesting is having, but Mr Turnbull will only see a small slice of the problem – floodplain harvesting is happening throughout north-west NSW."

Ms Hankinson said the onus was on the State Government to deal with the problem and Mr Turnbull must work with NSW if he wanted to see national water commitments met.

"People have been taking water that is not theirs for years and the NSW government has not lifted a finger to stop it," she said.

"Downstream rivers, wetlands and other water users are paying dearly for this ongoing and unregulated capture of water.

"Investing in water efficiency will have little effect if we don't deal with people indiscriminately taking water," Ms Hankinson said.

"If the NSW Government does not tackle the issue head on, Mr Turnbull's work on water efficiency will be a small drop in a very leaky bucket.

"Floodplain harvesting must be stopped and offending infrastructure removed – this is a golden opportunity for the NSW Government to prove they are serious about protecting our rivers."

A one-page fact sheet on floodplain harvesting is attached.

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