

Media Release

11 March 2004

**Nature Conservation Council of NSW
Inland Rivers Network**

Environmentalists and Knowles on collision course over water

The Carr Government is proposing to amend the Water Management Act to allow for access licences in perpetuity to be granted to irrigators, meaning \$6.8 billion of public resources is being handed over to private interests.

This move will see water given away with no security for the environment or the broader NSW public.

"It is appalling that Minister Knowles has progressed so far in the negotiations with irrigators without consulting the NSW public on this issue" said NCC Water Policy officer, Rachael Young.

"The proposal offers no security for the environment and locks in current water extractions. Not only that but the plan for perpetual licences will make it even harder to return desperately needed flows to the environment." she said.

"We know our rivers are over-allocated, we know the Murray needs more water. This proposal makes it that much harder to fix the problems we know we have. It makes no sense" said Inland Rivers Network Coordinator, Brendan Fletcher. "We need a license system that ensures river health, involves the public, and sets NSW on the path to sustainable water and river management. This proposal is the antithesis of such a system," he said.

News Desks please note:

Press Conference at NSW Parliament House in Media Room Level 6 12.45pm Thurs. 11 March 2004.

For media information please contact Rachael Young - 0425 284 573
or Brendan Fletcher 0407 279 088