

# *Media Release*

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**Nature Conservation Council of NSW  
Total Environment Centre  
Inland Rivers Network**

## **CoAG Water Test for Carr**

Environment groups today called on the NSW Government to commit to save the state's stressed rivers by 2014, by taking a strong position on river health to tomorrow's meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (CoAG) meeting. The call comes after the NSW Government last night passed legislation which gives irrigators perpetual access to water and entrenches sub-standard water sharing plans which do nothing to achieve healthy rivers.

"The NSW Government has given a huge windfall to irrigators but has so far refused to give the environment its fair share," said NCC Executive Officer, Brooke Flanagan.

"NSW has some of the most stressed rivers in the country - a fact this government has consistently ignored," said Ms Flanagan.

"The National Water Initiative, to be discussed at CoAG, presents an opportunity for the NSW Government to commit to giving something back to our degraded rivers," said Total Environment Centre Director, Jeff Angel.

"Bob Carr must take a strong position to CoAG and commit NSW to achieving healthy rivers within 10 years. The current water sharing plans do not even go close to achieving this," Mr Angel said.

"The National Water Initiative must also include a risk management policy to take account of climate change impacts. Without healthy rivers, the communities which depend upon them will suffer," said Mr Angel

"NSW should be promoting risk sharing provisions that are flexible and do not limit recovery of water for rivers," said Inland Rivers Network Coordinator, Brendan Fletcher.

"In particular, climate change is a huge risk which threatens to significantly reduce available water. CoAG must ensure that our rivers do not unfairly bear this risk," Mr Fletcher said.

"We also call on CoAG to commit to a national system of freshwater protected areas to conserve our rivers and wetlands, as national parks conserve our terrestrial ecosystems," said Mr Fletcher.

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