



MEDIA RELEASE

Broad agreement on the need to move forwards in MDB

24 June 2026, Canberra ACT – Today's publication of the 'What we Heard' Report following public consultation on the Basin Plan Review shows a clear united message: priorities have shifted, move on from "just adding water".

"After three decades of reform focused on reducing diversions to rebalance towards the environment, it's clear that priorities are now shifting to a broader range of issues that cannot be addressed by just adding water," said National Irrigators' Council CEO Zara Lowien.

"There may always be divide on just how much water is used in the Basin, but what is interesting about this report is just how much stakeholders agree on, particularly on the need to move forward."

The report shows broad agreement on the need to maximise environmental outcomes from the water already available, better integrate land and water management, improve water quality and critical human needs, address native fish decline, and improve governance and transparency.

"These are some substantial and important areas, where the Government could prioritise investment, and deliver important and meaningful outcomes alongside all stakeholders," said NIC CEO Zara Lowien.

"Where there are diverging views, it shows there is more work to be done, and likely no simple solution right now."

"We are pleased to see the MDBA captured concerns that irrigated agriculture was overlooked as a 'missing chapter' on how communities and industries have been impacted by the Basin Plan," said Ms Lowien.

With 72% of inflows now remaining in rivers for the environment, the balance has been struck, and this report contains a lot of important issues which can't be addressed by 'just adding water'.

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