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MEDIA RELEASE

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Local government welcomes Interim Inspector-General of Murray Darling Basin Water Resources Report

The Murray Darling Association (MDA), Australia's peak body representing local government across the Basin has welcomed the Interim Inspector-General Mick Keelty report, particularly noting the opportunities identified around leadership, information and communication, and governance.

The *Impact of lower inflows on state shares under the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement* report was provided to Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia, the Hon Keith Pitt MP, on 30 March 2020 and outlines findings from the inquiry and provides five key recommendations to the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) and Basin Officials Committee (BOC).

“This report is concise, factual and the recommendations provide governments a clear directive” said Murray Darling Association Chief Executive Office Emma Bradbury. “The findings reflect what we have heard from our members and communities for years. It calls out the need for unity, education and leadership to serve the national interest now and into the future.”

The report emphasises the state's responsibilities, noting a more unified Basin-wide position and plan of action for Basin Plan implementation is required across all levels of government to improve leadership in the Basin and address the current crisis in confidence.

The short timeframe given to the Interim Inspector-General to prepare this report necessarily limited his ability to consult even more widely, but his findings provide a sound basis for Basin governments to begin to act.

The MDA calls on all Basin Ministers to act with urgency on the recommendations as well as those contained in other reports to government. Lower inflows right across the Basin, the different rules that apply in various jurisdictions and the as yet unanswered allegations of corruption are undermining trust and confidence in the Plan. We need all parties to understand how the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement works and that no one is getting “special deals” under the Basin Plan.

The MDA commends this report to government and urges the urgent implementation of all five recommendations.

ENDS *For more information, contact Murray Darling Association Chief Executive Officer, Emma Bradbury on 0429 905 017.*