



admin@mda.asn.au
www.mda.asn.au
T (03) 5480 3805
ABN: 64 636 490 493

463 High Street
P.O. Box 1268
Echuca, Vic 3564

3rd Floor, 553 Kiewa Street
P.O. Box 359
Albury, NSW 2640

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Alice Russell
Marketing and Communications Officer
Phone (03) 5480 3805
Email a.russell@mda.asn.au

Contact: Greg Toll
National President
Phone (03) 5480 3805
Email admin@mda.asn.au

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[1500GL Cap on Commonwealth Water Buybacks Passes into Law]

The Murray Darling Association has commended the government in passing legislation to cap on Commonwealth water buybacks at 1500GL. The Water Amendment Bill 2015 passed into law on Monday night, with this important news eclipsed by the tumultuous events of the leadership change only hours later.

The cap on buybacks provides certainty for farmers and irrigators, recognising the social and economic impacts that removal of water from farming communities can create.

The Murray Darling Association has long advocated for the use and management of basin water resources to deliver balanced economic, social and environmental outcomes and government's delivery on this key election commitment ensures the Basin Plan continues to meet that obligation.

In a submission to the parliament regarding the Water Amendment Bill 2015, the MDA pushed for the cap to 'provide certainty to our farming and irrigation communities, and remain committed to sustainable environmental management practices'.

The Murray Darling Association is confident that the balance of the 2750GL of environmental water can be delivered through improved efficiencies in the current water delivery system and with innovation and collaboration by all parties.

In supporting the cap, the MDA noted that the inclusion in the Amendment of 's85C(4)(d), [which] provides that purchases by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) on behalf of the

For conservation and sustainable development

Commonwealth do not count under the 1500 Gigalitres limit' provides a level of flexibility to respond to both irrigators and the environment.

“The MDA has worked hard to represent the interests of our member communities in ensuring this legislation was put before the Parliament”, National President Greg Toll said. “CEO Emma Bradbury and myself engaged extensively with the Labor Country Caucus on behalf of members, inviting Lisa Chesters MP to the area to assess the impacts of buy-back first hand. We travelled to Canberra several times to advocate for bi-partisan support for this bill.”

The legislation of the cap provides certainty to our farmers, the irrigation sector and our communities and affirms the continuing commitment to the broader objectives of the Basin Plan and its obligation to meet environmental targets” she said.

The Murray Darling Association will continue to support irrigators in achieving savings through infrastructure upgrades and innovation.

A healthy environment is an imperative valued by farmers, irrigators, food producers and all Basin communities. Agricultural producers are the custodians of the productive lands they farm, and are committed to ensuring sustainability for future generations.

[End]