



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

Level 1, 250 Anstruther St  
P.O. Box 1268  
Echuca, Vic 3564

# STATEMENT

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## MDA calls on Basin governments to ensure reliable and transparent systems of compliance to address Floodplain Harvesting

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On May 29 2020, The Guardian published a story titled [NSW water officials knew decades of unmeasured floodplain harvesting by irrigators was illegal](#).

The Murray-Darling Association (MDA) is both concerned and relieved that *New South Wales water officials have acknowledged that decades of unregulated and unmeasured floodplain harvesting by irrigators was illegal, according to the minutes of recent meetings* as reported by the Guardian.

There is some relief that what has been openly known and called out by NSW communities for years is being acknowledged by the Department.

The MDA supports the strongest possible regime of compliance with the laws and regulations that apply to water users. This is essential to ensure fair and equitable use of our shared resource, and a sustainable system to support all water users.

Any and all water users who are operating in breach of the NSW Water Act of 2000 should be held accountable.

The absence of licencing and regulation of license floodplain harvesting has created an environment of distrust and the perception of vested interests 'gaming' the system.

This undermines community confidence in the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, tarnishes compliant operators, compromises the health and the integrity of both our political system and the Basin's eco system, and is robbing future generations of a healthy and prosperous future.

The MDA continues its call on the NSW and all Basin governments to establish reliable and transparent systems of regulation and compliance, and calls on the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) to redouble its efforts to enforce NSW water law.

We express the hope that the Office of the Inspector General can, in due course, step in to strengthen compliance.

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