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MEDIA RELEASE

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Local Government expresses concern over NSW Floodplain Harvesting decision

The Murray Darling Association (MDA), Australia's peak body representing local government across the Murray-Darling Basin, has written to NSW Water Minister Melinda Pavey on behalf of the councils of the far west to express their concern about the recent decision to allow floodplain harvesting following recent rainfall.

"The announcement has caused deep distress to individuals and communities relying on first flush flows to recharge the system and restore connectivity," said Murray Darling Association Chief Executive Office Emma Bradbury. "We have taken calls from Mayors, councils and community members following this decision".

Councils from the Far West region of NSW contacted Murray Darling Association to establish a united position in expressing concern about a lack of transparency in process and communication regarding pumping restriction orders and recent exemptions, and the impact this decision has on community confidence.

MDA member councils from Bourke to Wentworth urged the Minister to uphold her previous commitment to the protection of first flush events from the Northern Basin, giving recent inflows the best chance to travel as far downstream as possible.

"The Darling River from Bourke to Wentworth has been disconnected for three years now. It remains an identified ecosystem in crisis visiting acute hardship on the towns, communities and people along the system," Murray Darling Association region chair Cr Jane MacAllister said from Wentworth today. "The Minister needs to be clear about what restrictions are in place, who is exempt, and for what reasons."

The letter to the Minister implores NSW to complete and adopt the required water resource plans essential to the protection of flows and consistency of process, affirms local government's commitment to work constructively with NSW and all Basin governments to achieve our common objectives of a healthy working Basin supporting vibrant, connected communities and economies.

ENDS *For more information, contact Murray Darling Association Chief Executive Officer, Emma Bradbury on 0429 905 017 or Cr Jane MacAllister on 0427 118 396.*