



# **Katrina Hodgkinson MP**

## **Minister for Primary Industries**

## **Minister for Small Business**

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# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **NSW LIMITS WATER BUYBACKS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PURPOSES**

The NSW Government has capped the purchase of water licences for environmental purposes in the NSW portion of the Murray Darling Basin, Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson has announced.

“Effective from today, the NSW Government will restrict the amount of water which the Commonwealth Government can purchase for the environment as part of its Murray Darling Basin Plan,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“We tried to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth to find strategies that will improve water use efficiency, allow Basin communities to adjust, and make water available for environmental flows, however NSW has been brushed aside.

“The Commonwealth Government has ignored the very real concerns of NSW Basin communities about the potential size and pace of an environmental water buyback program, so the NSW Government has been forced to act.

“From today, further water purchases for the environment will be restricted to three per cent per valley per decade, a more sustainable rate of purchase which will provide much needed breathing space and time for rural economies to adjust.”

Ms Hodgkinson said the NSW Government has consistently sought the Commonwealth’s agreement to ensure that the focus of water recovery is on infrastructure, environmental works and measures and strategic purchases rather than open purchase tenders.

“However the Commonwealth has ignored our legitimate concerns, and has expected us to sign up and trust them, which is dangerously short sighted,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“Once the personalities have moved on, what remains will be in black and white, so it is important that we get this right.”

Ms Hodgkinson said that once the three per cent limit has been reached in a valley, no more purchases for environmental purposes will be approved and processed by NSW.

“It is important to note that this restriction has no impact on trade for consumptive purposes, licence transfers that are part of an infrastructure project, or temporary trades of allocation water,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“The NSW Government will not stand by and allow the Commonwealth to take the lazy option which removes water from productive purposes in NSW.”

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