



## **Australian Government**

Australian Government response to the  
Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation  
Committee Committee report:

Water Legislation Amendment (Inspector-General of  
Water Compliance and Other Measures) Act 2021

May 2024

## Response

### Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the Inspector-General of Water Compliance works with the Murray–Darling Basin Authority and basin states to finalise a memorandum of understanding as a matter of priority. The memorandum of understanding should, amongst other things, clarify responsibilities and data sharing arrangements.

### Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

### Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the Inspector-General of Water Compliance works with stakeholders and basin states to avoid duplication and provide quality information on its compliance, oversight and inquiry activities in plain English.

### Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

### Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that the Australian Government better publicises the Inspector-General of Water Compliance's functions through the development of an information campaign. The campaign should, amongst other things, clarify how the Inspector-General of Water Compliance's role interacts with the Murray–Darling Basin Authority and basin state agencies.

### Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

### Recommendation 4

The committee recommends that the Australian Government assesses whether the Inspector-General of Water Compliance is adequately resourced to conduct in-depth investigations into allegations of non-compliance.

### Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

**Recommendation 5**

The committee recommends that the Australian Government considers whether the Inspector-General's current portfolio arrangements are appropriate and whether alternative arrangements could improve actual, or perceived, independence.

**Response**

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

**Recommendation 6**

The committee recommends the Australian Government strengthens protections afforded to individuals who disclose information to the Inspector-General of Water Compliance.

**Response**

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

**Recommendation 7**

The committee recommends that the Australian Government reviews penalty provisions under the Water Legislation Amendment (Inspector-General of Water Compliance and Other Measures) Act 2021 to ensure penalties are sufficient to deter offenders and proportionate to harm caused.

**Response**

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

**Recommendation 8**

The committee recommends that the Australian Government amends the Water Legislation Amendment (Inspector-General of Water Compliance and Other Measures) Act 2021 to require the responsible Minister to table the following reports in each House of the Parliament:

- reports into audits under section 73L and 73M;
- annual reports under section 215Y;
- reports on inquiries conducted by the Inspector-General of Water Compliance under sections 239AE and 239AF; and
- guidelines issued by the Inspector-General of Water Compliance under section 215V.

**Response**

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

**Dissenting Recommendation 1 (Nationals)**

That the Australian Government establish a mechanism to account for outcomes achieved through complementary measures as an alternative to water recovery to meet Basin Plan objectives.

**Response**

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

**Dissenting Recommendation 2 (Nationals)**

That the Inspector-General of Water Compliance monitors the outcomes of complimentary measures and the constraints management strategy to ensure water management tools are being used effectively and associated strategies are working.

**Response**

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.