

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

2.37 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth work towards a full and unconditional referral of powers relevant to the management of the MDB and, in the absence of such full referral, consider pursuing other options to provide for complete federal management.

Recommendation 2

3.37 The committee recommends that the Basin Plan be implemented as set out in the Water Act, and made available by early 2011, as provided for in the IGA but also pursue all options with states to expedite the end of transitional arrangements and application of the Basin Plan at the earliest opportunity possible.

Recommendation 3

4.41 The committee recommends that the work identified in the Ramsar Snapshot Study as key information gaps and priority work be undertaken by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

Recommendation 4

5.54 The committee recommends that the implementation of an Environmental Watering Plan, or any measures to acquire and provide for environmental water, should not be considered in isolation of the potential socio-economic impacts of these plans.

Recommendation 5

5.83 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth work towards achieving a nationally uniform system of water trading and licensing arrangements that ensures fair treatment across all regions and states.

Recommendation 6

5.97 The committee recommends that there be no compulsory acquisition of water entitlements.

Recommendation 7

5.115 The committee recommends that careful consideration is given to the impact of the acceleration of the water buybacks when infrastructure projects are yet to be commenced or completed for example, the impact of a modern delivery system on on-farm infrastructure that has not been upgraded.

Recommendation 8

5.116 The committee recommends that a higher priority be placed on the re-plumbing of rural Australia through the urgent implementation of both on-farm and off-farm infrastructure projects.

Recommendation 9

5.121 The committee recommends that if the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder has not already implemented any plans for the delivering environmental water to key environmental assets to date, this process should be immediately undertaken.

Recommendation 10

6.37 The committee recommends that any policies derived as a result of the *Sustainable Yields Project* be carefully examined and reviewed in light of the assessed impact on water availability, with particular consideration given to policy impacts on groundwater extractions.

Recommendation 11

6.39 The committee recommends that a study be conducted on the impact of decreased water availability, as a result of government policy, on food production areas along the MDB. The study should take into account other studies and results completed in this area.

Recommendation 12

7.41 The committee recommends that priority should be given to upgrading and modernising monitoring of water usage from the MDB.

Recommendation 13

7.42 The committee recommends urgent identification of unregulated water interception activities across the MDB. The relevant data should be used to inform the development of state policies regarding the regulation of usage of these activities.

Recommendation 14

7.43 The committee recommends a study to be undertaken to better understand how the states monitor and manage the harvesting of overland flows and to provide policy development guidelines in this area for the relevant states.