



**Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham**  
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment  
Senator for South Australia

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

19 December 2014

### **Review of the *Water Act 2007* report**

The Australian Government today tabled the report on the Review of the *Water Act 2007*.

Senator Simon Birmingham, Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, welcomed the report from the expert panel, which sets out their findings and recommendations.

Senator Birmingham thanked the members of the expert panel – Mr Eamonn Moran, PSM QC (Chair), Mr Peter Anderson, Dr Steve Morton and Mr Gavin McMahon – for their efforts, particularly in relation to the extensive consultation undertaken in preparing this report, for which they received more than 70 submissions and met with more than 50 parties during the course of the review.

“In providing me with its report, the expert panel has made a number of findings and recommendations, all of which are designed to improve the operation of the *Water Act* and ensure that it delivers on its objects more effectively and efficiently,” said Senator Birmingham.

“The panel has recognised the ongoing nature of the reforms that fall under the *Water Act* and are yet to be fully implemented – I am pleased to see that their recommendations take this matter into account.

“The panel has used this opportunity to take a close look at the *Water Act* in line with the Government’s expectations for red tape reductions and reducing the regulatory burden on business.

“The terms of reference included a requirement for the panel to look at reducing red tape and, based on a preliminary review of the recommendations, I am confident that we can improve and streamline the *Water Act* in ways that reduce red tape, and support our commitment to implement the Basin Plan in full and on time.

“The Government is committed to continuous improvement in our laws and regulations and reducing costs to industry and will carefully consider these recommendations over coming months.

“In order to deliver red tape reduction as quickly as possible the Government will immediately implement recommendations 11 and 18 which call for further work to streamline various *Water Charge Rules* and water information reporting requirements.

“These matters have been a burden to industry for a number of years, in relation to annual costs, and it’s important that we revise these requirements to ensure they are fair and reasonable.

“I have written to the ACCC and BoM requesting that they commence work promptly,” said Senator Birmingham.

The report presents 23 recommendations, including:

- simplifying the processes for amending and accrediting state water resource plans;
- providing the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder with greater flexibility in using the proceeds of water trade to deliver environmental outcomes; and
- the next scheduled review of the Water Act to occur in 2024 and for the Murray-Darling Basin Plan to be reviewed in 2026.

The Australian Government will respond formally to all recommendations in the New Year.

The Report is available at <http://www.environment.gov.au/water/publications/report-of-the-independent-review-water-act-2007>