



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Securing a reliable water supply for the future of New South Wales**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**26 June 2013**

The Standing Committee on State Development today released its final report for the inquiry into the adequacy of water storages in New South Wales, recommending a number of measures to secure an adequate and reliable water supply for the State's current and future needs.

The report recognises the importance of balancing the competing needs of urban, agricultural, industrial and environmental users in New South Wales, and finds that an integrated approach to water management, which also recognises the integral role of water storages, is the key to securing an adequate and reliable water supply into the future.

“All urban, industrial and agricultural water users in New South Wales have a responsibility to use water wisely and efficiently, and government should take an active role in facilitating the responsible use of water,” said the Hon Rick Colless MLC, Committee Chairman. “Strategies to reduce demand, efficiency incentive programs, as well as recycling and stormwater harvesting initiatives, are all measures that should form part of an integrated water management approach.”

The Committee was concerned that prioritising environmental needs above water supply to industry and high security needs in regulated rivers, is not sufficiently balanced.

“While we recognise water for the environment is an important factor for the health of a river system, water for industry that creates wealth, employment and provides food security for the nation should have greater priority,” said Mr Colless.

“Over the previous two decades there have been many changes to the administration of water throughout New South Wales, including the separation of ownership of land and water resources, the creation of water sharing plans and the introduction of regular environmental flows.

“Last year the Murray Darling Basin Plan foreshadowed the transfer of 2,750 gigalitres of water from the irrigation industry to environmental flows into the Darling and Murray Rivers, Lakes Alexandrina and Albert and the Coorong in South Australia. During this period there has been substantial agricultural irrigation and industrial development in New South Wales, and the significant transfer of water away from these industries has caused considerable concern in regional communities, particularly during the recent severe drought in western New South Wales.”

“The NSW Government needs to do more in this area to address the concerns of irrigators, which is why we have recommended that the NSW Government review the environmental flow allocations for all valleys in New South Wales and lobby the Commonwealth Government to do the same in relation to the Murray Darling Basin Plan.”

The report notes that New South Wales and Australia are recognised leaders in the field for their best practice methods in water management, and expresses the view that knowledge, innovation and technology in water management and conservation will continue to develop, providing us with more options into the future.

“This report recognises that opportunities exist to optimise the State’s current water storage infrastructure and achieve significant water savings. Taken together, our recommendations provide a way forward for government to realise these goals,” said Mr Colless.

A full copy of the Committee’s recommendations and a summary of the key issues discussed in the final report are attached. The report is on the Committee’s website at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/statedevelopment](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/statedevelopment). Hard copies are available on request.

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*For further comment please contact the Hon Rick Colless MLC,  
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