

MURRAY RIVER GROUP OF COUNCILS TAKES ITS PUSHBACK WATER BUYBACKS MESSAGE TO CANBERRA

Murray River Group of Councils is taking its "PushbackBuybacks" message to Canberra after accepting an invitation to participate in a public hearing being conducted by the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee for the Inquiry into the Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Bill 2023.

If the Bill is passed into legislation, it will pave the way for the reintroduction of water buybacks from irrigation farmers to meet environmental water targets as part of the Murray River Basin Plan.

MRGC Chair Cr Rob Amos said he looked forward to presenting the group's position and reasons behind the pushback to the committee on the evening of Tuesday, 31 October.

"The research and our collective experience tell us that water buybacks damage local industries, economies and communities," Cr Amos said.

"The legacy water buybacks left on our region last time, includes \$500 million of lost productivity across the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District each year, massive job losses, business closure and the breakdown of the social fabric of communities. We can't let that happen again.

"We appreciated Australian Senator David Van visiting our region last week to hear firsthand our concerns and that of local farmers and agricultural industry representatives.

"It's only through parliamentarians taking the time to listen to the voices and stories of 'real people' - on farms and in communities - that the gravity of the negative impacts water buybacks cause can truly be understood.

"We encourage all Australian parliamentarians to look beyond water targets only and apply a triple-bottom-line (environmental, social and economic impacts) lens when considering how they vote on the upcoming Bill – for the benefit of all Australians."

For more information and to sign the petition, visit <http://www.mrgc.com.au/pushbackbuybacks/>.

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About the Murray River Group of Councils

The Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC) comprises of six councils in northern Victoria, Mildura and Swan Hill Rural City Councils and Loddon, Gannawarra, Campaspe and Moira Shire Councils.



LGA	POPULATION 2021	LGA	AREA
Mildura	56,972	Mildura	22,083 Km2
Campaspe	38,735	Loddon	6,696 Km2
Moira	30,522	Swan Hill	6,115 Km2
Swan Hill	21,403	Campaspe	4,519 Km2
Gannawarra	10,638	Moira	4,047 Km2
Loddon	7,759	Gannawarra	3,735 Km2

Water is the lifeblood of our communities.

Agricultural commodities in the MRGC region have combined a value in excess of \$4 billion. Together, the agriculture and food manufacturing sectors account for, a third of all economic output, 43% of all local expenditure and one in four jobs in our region. Around half of all farm businesses in our region rely on irrigation.

The rivers, floodplains, lakes and wetlands of northern Victoria have enormous environmental value and are fundamental to our regional identity. Our region is home to four Ramsar wetlands: Hattah-Kulkyne, Kerang Wetlands, Gunbower and Barmah.

Our communities depend on a healthy Murray River system for drinking water and for recreation. Our tourism industry relies in large part on a healthy Murray River system as the single main attraction for the region.

All these depend on the careful management of the Murray Darling Basin water resources in partnership with Basin communities.