

AUSTRALIAN[®] WATER

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian Water Association welcomes Productivity Commission's inquiry into water reforms

Australian Water Association CEO Jonathan McKeown has welcomed the announcement last week by Treasurer Scott Morrison of the Productivity Commission's inquiry into water reforms in Australia.

"Australia's water reform journey has been ongoing over several decades, reflecting the fundamental importance of water as an economic enabler and the significant challenges of managing this natural resource against a backdrop of population growth, climate change and aging infrastructure," Mr McKeown said.

"The Association looks forward to playing an active role in this inquiry to advocate for future reforms that align the sustainable management of water to Australia's imminent challenges. These challenges include providing efficient water to meet our needs in four key areas: safe drinking water, water for agriculture and industry, water for liveable communities, and water for the environment.

"Australia's water reform journey is broader than the Murry Darling Basin and this review is a timely opportunity to implement a clear pathway forward in the next stage of water reforms.

"The Association would like to see a greater focus on community acceptance of alternative sources of water including recycled, greater support and uptake of new technological innovations, and continued discussions on the most effective government structures for the water sector.

"We have seen all Australian States and Territories make some very promising progress against the 2004 National Water Initiative, such as the construction of desalination plants in capital cities. But, much more is needed if we are to create vibrant and liveable cities, towns and rural communities that meet our future needs.

"Water security for all Australians is the number one advocacy priority for the Association, and we have been working hard to highlight issues around water scarcity, infrastructure funding, and innovations in the sector. We are in the process of developing a Water Security Scorecard to provide an annual snapshot of the level of water security that currently exists across Australia.

"The first scorecard will be launched at Ozwater'17 in May, and the Association looks forward to the outcome of the Productivity Commission's inquiry helping to drive future work around water security in Australia."

The Commission is due to release an issues paper in March this year to stimulate stakeholder feedback and then a draft report in August, ahead of handing its final version to the government in December. Further information and the terms of reference are available on the Commission's website.

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For more information or interviews contact Ashleigh James 0488 160 277.

About the Australian Water Association

The Australian Water Association is an independent, not-for-profit association for water professionals and organisations, providing leadership in the water sector through collaboration, advocacy and professional development. As Australia's peak water industry body, the Australian Water Association has the largest broadly based membership, with approximately 700 corporate members and 5,000 individual members representing the diversity and breadth of the Australian water industry.

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