

EXTRACTED FROM:

Department of the Environment and Energy (Cth), *Local engagement*
<http://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/local-engagement>

Local engagement

Local information and experience is critical to being able to effectively manage and deliver Commonwealth environmental water. We are very grateful for the expertise, advice, feedback and support provided by our [delivery partners](#), environmental water holders, members of the scientific community, regional advisory groups who invite us to participate in their processes, and the many landowners who work with us to plan, manage and monitor the use of environmental water in the Basin.

Local Engagement Officers

The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder has six local engagement officers working alongside State and local land and water management officers, providing outreach to local communities throughout the Basin. Their contact details are provided at left.

Approach to managing Commonwealth environmental water

The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder is committed to being a ‘good neighbour’ and has adopted the following approach to managing environmental water:

- **Maximising the environmental outcomes:** The Commonwealth environmental water portfolio is used to achieve the best environmental effect, through water delivery, carry over and trade.
- **No intended harm:** a conservative risk based approach to environmental flow management is taken so that unintended impacts do not occur. All decisions on water use are informed by a comprehensive assessment of risk, with arrangements put in place to ensure risks are appropriately managed. Commonwealth environmental water is also ordered and delivered at flow rates generally below the operational limits to provide a buffer against unpredictable local inflows resulting from rainfall.
- **Using local knowledge:** We are committed to working closely with communities and delivery partners (including state agencies, river operators and local advisory groups) so they can engage meaningfully on Commonwealth environmental water management. This engagement is critical to ensure water is delivered to important environmental assets and potential impacts and risks are identified and managed.

- **Negotiating consent:** If potentially unacceptable impacts on private property are identified we will negotiate with affected landholders to avoid or minimise any potential problems and obtain consent to watering events. In many situations landholders support watering events because the outcomes are mutually beneficial, such as by creating environmental benefits while also supporting the productivity of floodplain pastures.
- **Equal treatment:** Commonwealth environmental water is delivered by river operators within the current operating framework that applies to all types of water deliveries. Commonwealth environmental water is subject to fees and charges and receives the same allocations as equivalent entitlements held for consumptive use. The underlying entitlement characteristics should not be changed; however, the operating rules which enable water use should continue to evolve to meet the needs of all water users, just as they always have.
- **Flexibility:** At times of critical environmental need, the Commonwealth may assert its rights to access its share of channel capacity. However, in the event of channel capacity becoming limited, we can be flexible about how and when environmental water is ordered so as to minimise any potential impact on others.

Working with others

Consistent with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder's commitment to community engagement, long-term monitoring has been developed in consultation with, and involves, local land and water managers. We will be working on improving mechanisms to share information from monitoring with environmental water managers and the community. Localised teams made up of a range of experts including scientists from some of Australia's leading regional universities and research institutions will undertake each of the seven projects.

This collaborative effort is part of the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder's commitment to facilitating the sharing of knowledge and expertise amongst the many people across the Basin who are contributing to, or have an interest in, environmental water.

The time, expertise and advice provided by our delivery partners, other environmental water holders, members of the scientific community, regional water management advisory groups and the many landowners who work with us to plan, manage and monitor the use of environmental water in the Murray-Darling Basin is essential to the success of the Long Term Intervention Monitoring Project.

Monitoring projects are not the only source of information about the results being achieved. Local communities are reporting on the benefits they are observing from the use of environmental water in their area.

Your suggestions for environmental watering

Individuals and groups within the Basin community are encouraged to submit suggestions for the use of Commonwealth environmental water. For more information about submitting suggestions on environmental water use, please contact your Local Engagement Officer, or go to the [Your suggestions](#) web page.

All media inquiries should be directed to the Department's media team:

Email: media@environment.gov.au **Phone:** +61 2 6275 9880