



Getting the balance right when it comes to environmental water management

More research and increased community input are vital to ensure effective environmental water management, according to a Victorian parliamentary committee report tabled today.

The report by the Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee has made 21 findings and 5 recommendations focusing on:

- additional research and monitoring, to identify more efficient and effective ways to use environmental water and to reduce negative impacts
- increased transparency, so that the community can understand what is being done, the reasons behind particular decisions and what is being achieved
- greater opportunities for community input, so that water managers can gain the benefits of local knowledge and understand stakeholders' needs.

“Environmental water management is relatively new in Victoria and there is still much to be learnt to ensure the best outcomes are achieved,” said Committee Chair Josh Bull.

“Our report emphasises the importance of government agencies, water managers and the community working together to ensure that healthy ecosystems are maintained in and around our waterways.”

The Committee received submissions from a range of organisations and people across Victoria. Public hearings were held in Melbourne and regional centres, where issues discussed included the timing of environmental flows, water trading, infrastructure needs, and ways to limit any negative consequences of environmental water management.

The report noted that events such as hypoxic blackwater, which degrades water quality and can cause the death of fish and other aquatic species, can be significant and distressing for local communities. The Committee emphasised the importance of government bodies providing clear and detailed explanations for such events to affected communities in a timely manner.

“Water is a limited resource which is required by the environment, irrigators and communities,” Mr Bull said.

“All decisions about how water should be used or managed must consider and balance the needs of all stakeholders.

“The Committee’s findings and recommendations seek to improve environmental water management, to maximise the benefits to the environment and to Victorian communities.”

The report is available from the Committee's [website](#).

Media queries

For media comment, contact the Committee Chair, Josh Bull MP, on 9740 4091.

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