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# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Basin Plan: Time to focus on the future

The Murray Group of Concerned Communities (MGCC) says the Basin Plan outlined by Water Minister Burke today signals the end of one process and the beginning of another but still poses significant risks for communities.

Water Minister Tony Burke today released the final version of the Basin Plan at the National Press Club saying no State or stakeholder will look at the Plan and say everything they want is in there but he can't compromise on the fundamental which is to "restore the system to health."

"The Minister admits that the Basin Plan he has signed into law will please no one, but for communities it effectively draws a line in the sand to start focusing on the future," MGCC Chairman Bruce Simpson said today.

"The Minister says the Plan ends 120 years of arguing between the states and provides real outcomes for the environment.

"As a community, we hope he is right because we have heard it before and we are getting tired of finding solutions that later become superseded by the next attempt to respond to Australia's varying climate and enviro-political pressures.

"We need this Government and future Governments to now stop focussing on water recovery and start focussing on water delivery and management and continue to work with communities."

Mr Simpson said the Basin Plan described today, while still failing to justify the need for such high water recovery or to provide a detailed environmental watering plan, is the culmination of years of robust negotiations and has come a long way from the Guide released in 2010.

"What we now have is a Plan that provides some flexibility and can be responsive to environmental works and measures and a Government that says they are more committed to infrastructure spending than buyback and we will hold them to that.

"It is thanks to the ongoing involvement of communities that we have seen the recognition by this Government that infrastructure spending is a better water recovery method than buyback. What we would like to see now is an end to buyback altogether.

"Of course we haven't had time to read the full Basin Plan and the Inter-Governmental Agreement has not yet been finalised so as always, the devil will be in the detail.

"Communities need to be aware of potential trap-door spiders contained in the Plan and need to continue to participate through the implementation process.

"The MGCC will continue to work with the Government to ensure they are accountable as they look at constraints management, potential flow regimes and watering plans," he said.

**ENDS: For further information contact Bruce Simpson on 0429 681 317**

**The MGCC represents the Central Murray region of 33,000 people who are passionate about living and working in these regional and rural communities. The Central Murray communities have already given 20 per cent of water entitlements to the environment.**