



I N L A N D  
R I V E R S  
N E T W O R K

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MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Darling/Baaka sacrificed for northern irrigators**

Inland Rivers Network condemns the NSW Coalition Government and the Shooters Fishers Farmers Party for sacrificing the health of the Darling/Baaka and its dependent communities through poor regulation of floodplain harvesting in northern NSW.

Spokesperson for Inland Rivers Network, Brian Stevens:

‘The volumes of water handed out in new entitlements to allow the capture of rainfall runoff before it enters rivers, and the capture of important medium flood flows, will continue the destruction of the Darling/Baaka River.’

‘The rules gazetted in water sharing plans for the Border Rivers, Gwydir and Macquarie Valleys allow for 500% accumulation of entitlement access and no triggers to stop access to rainfall runoff and flood flows until Menindee Lakes are at a critical low level of 195 GL (billion litres). The disastrous fish kills of 2019/20 occurred when Menindee Lakes held over 300 GL.’

‘The NSW Coalition and the Shooters Fishers Farmers Party have condemned the Darling/Baaka to longer periods of dry riverbed with stagnant slimy pools. This decline in river health started when floodplain harvesting exploded upstream during the 1990’s.’

‘The NSW Government has rewarded decades of unsustainable and unregulated water use with new licences while conducting no assessment of the downstream impacts on Darling/Baaka communities, native fish populations, groundwater recharge and important wetland areas.’

‘The future of the Darling/Baaka and its important connectivity with the lower Murray through the Menindee Lakes is now under dire threat.’

**Contact: Brian Steven 0429 903 082**

Images attached



Satellite image of Bourke 2003, private water storages full during the Millenium Drought. The same all-over northwestern NSW.

### Darling River, Wilcannia, April 2005

