

Media Release



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Pitt recognises need for change

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has today welcomed Federal Water Minister Keith Pitt's action on key VFF Basin Plan priorities.

VFF President David Jochinke said he was pleased the Minister has committed to no more buybacks but that commitment needs to be legislated.

"I take the Minister's comments at face value but I won't sleep soundly until I see no more buybacks in an Act of Parliament," Mr Jochinke said.

"We put our clear plan to Minister Pitt when he took on the portfolio and are glad to see action on splitting up the MDBA. We would like to see the MDBA split in three (implementation, compliance and operations) but acknowledge that carving off the compliance function is a step in the right direction," Mr Jochinke said.

VFF Water Council Chairman, Richard Anderson said it is good to see recognition that the Basin Plan is not a rigid document and that it was designed to change and adapt.

"We've been banging on about this for years: the Basin Plan is supposed to be a living document, just like the rivers themselves," Mr Anderson said.

The VFF question whether the \$20 million allocated for the wide and far-reaching river health program is sufficient.

"Moving forward we need to ensure complimentary measure projects are built into the 605 GL and that these are properly funded," Mr Anderson said.

Minister Pitt also acknowledged the release of the Water for the Environment Special Account (WESA) report which confirmed that 450 GL of additional water on top of the Basin Plan's 2750GL target could not be met by 2024.

"The VFF acknowledge the Minister's comments on the 450GL but we would like to see the futility of the 450 GL recognised through legislation," Mr Anderson said.

"Today was a step in the right direction, but we still have a long way to go."

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