



Water for Traditional Owners

Agreed to by the VFF Policy Council

Meeting 175

9 March 2022

Policy Statement

1. The VFF acknowledges government efforts at both a state and federal levels to deliver water to Traditional Owners.
2. The VFF expects that any recovery of water for Traditional Owners should not reduce the consumptive pool.
3. The VFF expects that water will only be returned to acknowledged and registered Traditional Owner groups working to benefit their members.
4. The VFF does not support water buyback programs for Traditional Owners as these programs reduce the consumptive pool.
5. Traditional Owner groundwater and surface water entitlements should only be made available within the existing provisions of the Water Act 1989.
6. Costs associated with Traditional Owner water (storage and delivery fees) should not be subsidised by existing entitlement holders. The VFF believes Traditional Owners and/or government must meet these costs.
7. Water recovered for Traditional Owners must be counted towards environmental targets including the Murray Darling Basin Plan.
8. The VFF expects that when government funds are used to upgrade infrastructure to generate water savings, the water savings be shared among all water users. Irrigators are expected to contribute to future maintenance of irrigation infrastructure, and therefore they must receive a share of the water savings from the project.
9. The VFF supports Traditional Owners having input into the planning and management of environmental water to achieve Traditional Owner cultural values.
10. Traditional Owner Groups appointed to Government agencies should not have input into:
 - a. The delivery of water through irrigation systems;
 - b. How irrigators manage water on their farms;
 - c. Transfer of groundwater and surface water among consumptive users.