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Enquiry into “certain matters relating to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan”

A submission to the committee from the Environmental Farmers Network.

Whilst works and measures could be considered a part of the solution in specific areas, we caution against any broader attempt to substitute adequate water-flows with infrastructure works and measures.

We know that for Australian rivers and their associated wetlands, to maintain long term health there must regularly be over-bank flows which move out of the channel and across the flood plain.

This flow of water through the flood plains and wetlands and returning to the main channel is fundamental to the health and function of the basin, and in most cases cannot be replicated by works and measures.

During the recent drought, engineering works and measures have played a role in providing drought refuges and environmental water to important wetlands, and while these works and measures made it possible to maintain critical environmental assets which would not have been otherwise met, engineering solutions are generally not a long-term alternative to returning the necessary volumes of water to rivers.

The promotion, investigation and acceptance of works and measures as a means of reducing the need for environmental flows needs to be closely monitored by the MDBA based on the best science available at the time.

John Pettigrew

Water Spokesperson

Environmental Farmers Network.