



Niall Blair
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Regional Water
Minister for Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 17 August 2018

RESPONSE TO NSW OMBUDSMAN WATER REPORT

The NSW Government has accepted the recommendations from the Ombudsman's final report into the management of water across the State, after its tabling in Parliament today.

Minister for Regional Water, Niall Blair acknowledged the report's findings, noting the Ombudsman's support for the NSW Government's current water reforms, which will help to avoid the past practices raised in the report.

The report recommends greater compliance activity, stronger regulatory tools, training to improve staff effectiveness, consistency in approach, as well as improved communication within Government.

Mr Blair said there are important messages for all natural resource agencies coming out of this report and the Government expects them to improve record keeping, enhance staff training and take stronger action around compliance.

The Government has already taken steps with the establishment of the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR), which focuses on water compliance and enforcement. The Ombudsman's report describes NRAR's creation as *'an important reform and an opportunity to rectify systemic and structural issues.'*

"Given the Ombudsman's endorsement of NRAR, it defies belief that both NSW Labor and the Greens voted against the legislation to create the independent regulator. It's clear that Labor has no policy on water, unless it's written by the Greens," Mr Blair said.

"The Government has acted decisively to change and to improve water management; this included committing \$23.2 million over two years to deliver the NSW Water Reform Action Plan.

"We consulted widely with communities across NSW and are now working to deliver a robust water management system that meets the needs of communities, our food and fibre producers, as well as the environment.

"We know there is more work to be done and we will continue to make sure the management of our most precious resource is transparent and fair."

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