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Media Release

Alexandrina Council responds to findings of Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission

Friday, 1 February 2019

Located at the end of Australia's largest river system, Alexandrina communities understand firsthand the environmental, economic, cultural and social devastation caused by a combination of drought and poor upstream water management.

The findings of the Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission, released this week, highlight the need for Basin states to pull together in good faith to achieve sustainable and equitable management of the river system. Alexandrina Council has been a strong supporter of the Basin Plan on the basis that having all Basin States working toward an agreed outcome is better than no plan at all. Council recognises the complexities of river management and it will take some time for us to digest the full findings of the Commissioner's report, but what is beyond doubt is that low flows have far-reaching consequences for our economy and our people.

Alexandrina Council Mayor Keith Parkes recognises the Royal Commission as an important step forward in bringing Basin State governments together in the quest to achieve a healthy, working Murray-Darling Basin.

"The Commissioner's findings will be of deep concern to our farmers, our tourism operators, and all of us who feel proud to live in this special and unique part of the world. We are committed to working with and supporting our community through this period of uncertainty by sharing information, facilitating informed debate and representing the interests of our community to other levels of government".

"The recent fish kill events in the Darling and the Commissioner's findings reinforce the need for all Basin States to remain focused on working together to achieve further environmental water recovery as required by the Basin Plan".

"Water reaching the Murray Mouth flushes salt to sea and sustains our iconic Coorong ecology, but along the way it supports our agricultural, fishing, wine and tourism industries. A healthy Murray-Darling is a non-negotiable and we need surety that upstream states will play by the rules", he said.

Mayor Parkes also recognises the importance of climate change projections informing river management.

"Council is proactively addressing climate change adaptation in the way we do business and we agree with Commissioner Walker that urgent action is needed to help us understand and prepare for the impacts of climate change on future river flows and on the ecology and prosperity of the entire Lower Murray, Lakes and Coorong region".

“We all drink water. We all live upstream and downstream from each other. We all want future generations to enjoy the bounty of Australia’s greatest river and we know in our hearts, that a healthy river means a healthy Basin,” he said.

In a changing climate, protecting environmental flows will provide resilience in times of drought and Alexandrina Council trusts that the findings of the Royal Commission will help bring about positive, collaborative change for the future wellbeing of our river and the communities which rely upon it.