

States asked to step up water-planning evaluation

The National Water Commission (NWC) has called for Australia's states and territories to strengthen their commitment to water planning by stepping up the way they monitor and report results.



Credit: WV Aken/ScienceImage

Releasing the inaugural [National Water Planning Report Card 2011](#), NWC Chair Chloe Munro said, 'Good water planning is the roadmap for how we share water resources and is critical to build confidence about these often difficult community decisions.

'The good news is that this summary of the status of water planning frameworks and 157 plans across Australia has found a welcome increase in both the number and quality of water plans.

'Encouragingly, we see more evidence in recent plans of better quality assessments with clearer information on how decisions were made on trade-offs between competing uses, as was intended under the National Water Initiative.

'However, there are still disappointing delays in developing and implementing plans in some areas. This is a real concern where failure to act has irreversible consequences.

'When it comes to existing water plans, many of them lack systematic monitoring, evaluation and reporting against their intended outcomes.

'This makes it very difficult to determine whether stated objectives are being achieved, and to what extent water plans are in fact delivering tangible benefits to communities, the economy, and the environment.

'In particular, there is room for improvement in accounting for all water use within a system, including interception and environmental water arrangements, and for better reporting on compliance and enforcement.

'The Commission hopes that this baseline report on the progress of Australia's states and territories in developing and implementing water planning will encourage a national discussion and promote better practice.

Source: National Water Commission

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