



# SENATOR PERIN DAVEY

## SENATOR FOR NEW SOUTH WALES

**THE NATIONALS**  
*for Regional Australia*

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### **STUDY TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO HALT CHOKE DECLINE**

The long-awaited study to review options to manage flows through, in and around the Barmah Choke is about to commence thanks to funding from the National Water Grid.

Senator for New South Wales Perin Davey said the Barmah Choke capacity has been declining over many years and river operators need options to relieve the pressure on the naturally narrow section of the Murray River.

“The impact of managing water demands through the choke are not new,” Senator Davey said.

“People living along the river and the connected creeks and streams from Tocumwal through Barmah to Koondrook and Barham have been highlighting the issue for years.

“I have had concerned landholders show me photos of the environmental degradation of the riverbanks.

“It was the first issue I raised with Water Minister Keith Pitt when he was appointed and the first trip he made was with me to do a trip on the river through the choke to see it for himself.

“The impact of treating the river like an irrigation channel, running it at constant high levels at the wrong time of year is causing major environmental issues like bank undercutting and slumping.”

Senator Davey said the study will look at options to reinstate historic delivery capacity within current trade restrictions.

“This is not about pushing more water downstream. It is about existing operational requirements and how we can do it better without compromising reliability or access for other water users,” she said.

“Importantly, the first phase is to do a thorough desktop analysis and talk to stakeholders, like Murray Irrigation, and locals about what options exist because no one knows better than those on the ground.

“I want them to look at the region and consider how we can use existing infrastructure better to allow river operators more flexibility in how they manage the river through the whole Murray-Edward-Wakool system.

“This is not just about the Murray River channel.



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“It is also about the Murray, the interconnecting streams and the irrigation channels; how can river operators use them for maximum efficiency and relieve the pressure on the choke.

The study is being funded through \$3million from the National Water Grid. It will be administered by NSW and is expected to be finalised in the second half of 2022.

The terms of reference have been developed consistent with the agreement of the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council in June 2020.

### Ends

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### Background

- The Barmah-Millewa region contains a series of naturally occurring narrow stretches of the River Murray that begins downstream of Cobram, Victoria and ends upstream of Echuca, Victoria.
- River channel capacity in the region has decreased steadily over many years and is one of the main challenges for river operators and a major concern to the community.
  - Channel capacity for regulated flows though the region (as measured downstream of Yarrawonga) have decreased from around 11,300 ML/day in the mid-1990s to approximately 9,200 ML/day currently. This reduction in capacity of around 20% per cent is one of the main challenges for river operators in the Murray–Darling Basin.