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Pushback message goes to Canberra

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Murray River Group of Councils is taking its 'PushbackBuybacks' message to Canberra.

The group has accepted an invitation to take part in a public hearing being conducted by the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee for the Inquiry into the Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Bill 2023. If the bill is passed into legislation, it will pave the way for the reintroduction of water buybacks from irrigation farmers to meet environmental water targets as part of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

MRGC chair Rob Amos said he looked forward to presenting the group's position and reasons behind the pushback to the committee on Tuesday, October 31.

"The research and our collective experience tell us that water buybacks damage local industries, economies and communities," Cr Amos said.

"The legacy water buybacks left on our region last time, includes \$500 million of lost productivity across the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District each year, mas-

sive job losses, business closure and the breakdown of the social fabric of communities.

"We can't let that happen again.

"We appreciated Australian Senator David Van visiting our region last week to hear first-hand our concerns and that of local farmers and agricultural industry representatives.

"It's only through parliamentarians taking the time to listen to the voices and stories of 'real people' — on farms and in communities — that the gravity of the negative impacts water buybacks cause can truly be understood.

"We encourage all Australian parliamentarians to look beyond

water targets only and apply a triple-bottom-line (environmental, social and economic impacts) lens when considering how they vote on the upcoming bill — for the benefit of all Australians."

The Murray River Group of Councils comprises six councils in northern Victoria: Mildura and Swan Hill rural city councils and Loddon, Gannawarra, Campaspe and Moira shire councils.

● **For more information and**

to sign a petition opposing the basin plan changes, visit:
<http://www.mrgc.com.au/pushbackbuybacks/>