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PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION TO REVIEW NATIONAL WATER INITIATIVE

The Morrison Government is today announcing a Productivity Commission inquiry into national water policy.

The National Water Initiative (NWI) is a shared commitment by governments to increase the efficiency of Australia's water use, provide investment confidence, supply security for rural and urban communities, and provide greater certainty for the environment.

The Commission will assess whether the water reforms agreed in the National Water Initiative, along with any other subsequent reforms adopted by COAG, are achieving their intended outcomes.

The inquiry will examine whether governments have been successful in achieving the objectives, outcomes and timelines of reform ideas proposed under the NWI.

Reform of the water sector has been ongoing over several decades, with the last Productivity Review into the NWI completed in April 2019. The Inquiry will also fulfil the statutory requirement for the second of the Productivity Commission's triennial assessments of progress towards achieving the objectives and outcomes of the NWI required by the Water Act 2007.

The Commission has been asked to provide further practical advice on ways in which the NWI could be improved, including specific advice to assist governments to progress their commitments to renew the NWI. Mr Drew Collins has been appointed as an Associate Commissioner to assist with this inquiry.

Timelines for this review have been extended to provide households, businesses and governments with much needed time to engage with the Commission on the inquiry. The review will be completed in early 2021.

A national, unified response at all levels of government is essential to face the current and future challenges of managing water. That is why the Coalition Government is committed to working with states and territories to improve water management now and into the future.

The Commission will undertake broad public consultation, including with Commonwealth, state and territory governments, consumers, environmental industries and Indigenous stakeholders.

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For further information, or to participate in the consultation process, please visit the Commission's website: www.pc.gov.au.