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FEDERAL GOVT MUST TAKEOVER MURRAY RIVER MANAGEMENT

The Federal Government must seize control of the Murray Darling from the states to help protect the river system for future generations, Australian advocacy group, GetUp said today.

The group's call comes as the Murray River recorded its lowest water inflow level in three months, fuelling fears for the future the great river system.

GetUp National Director, Simon Sheikh, whose organisation represents more than 50,000 Australians concerned about the future of the Murray, said that the recording highlighted the direr state of the Murray River and the need for one set of rules for the one great river system.

"Decades of mismanagement and neglect of the Murray Darling River by successive State Governments has meant that our nation's most important waterway is badly in need of rescue," Mr Sheikh said.

"What is urgently needed now is one set of rules and regulations for the one great river system.

Mr Sheikh said that independent legal advice obtained by constitutional law expert Professor John Williams from Adelaide University suggests that the Federal Government has the power to wrest control of the waterway from the states.

"Experts suggest there is a way and what's more Liberal, National, Greens and Independent politicians have already shown that there is also the political will to rescue Australia's biggest river," Mr Sheikh said.

Late last year, Liberal, National, Greens and Independent MPs joined forces to call on the Federal Government to take action for the sake of the river's future, accepting a GetUp petition to save the Murray signed by more than 50,000 Australians.

"Our message now to Federal Government is: throw the Murray River a lifeline, adopt a plan for one set of rules for one river and prevent the nation's food bowl from turning into a dust bowl," Mr Sheikh said.

"We cannot afford to let the situation of the country's most important river system get any more direr.

"We need a Federal Government takeover to protect the future of the river's health and the livelihoods of the people who depend on it. We need Federal Government to throw the Murray River this critical lifeline now."

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