



# Murray Darling Association Inc.

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## Region 6 Ordinary Meeting

### MINUTES

<b>Location:</b>	Murray Bridge Local Government Centre, 2 Seventh Street, Murray Bridge SA 5253
<b>Time/date:</b>	11.25 – 3.30 pm, Friday 14 February 2020; with lunch from 12.05 – 12.35pm
<b>Presenter:</b>	Ken Scott, A/Director, Aboriginal Partnerships, MDBA

#### 1. ATTENDANCE

##### 1.1 Present

CEO Bridget Mather, Cr Vern Leng, Councillor Brenton Qualmann (Coorong District Council)  
CEO Heather Barclay, Mayor Brenton Lewis, Stephen Packer (Rural City of Murray Bridge)  
Cr Melissa Rebbeck (Chair), Shen Mann (Proxy for Glenn Rappensberg), Cr Michael Scott (Alexandrina Council)  
Marilyn Henderson (City of Victor Harbor)  
Keith Loeser, Bruce Brooks (Individual Financial Members).

##### Guests

Ken Scott, A/Director, Aboriginal Partnerships (MDBA)  
Anna Horsman (MDBA ;Murray Bridge Office)  
Emma Bradbury (MDA CEO) via zoom  
Monika Rhodes (Secretariat)

##### Observers

Tracey Strugnell (Coorong District Council)  
Peter Smith (MDA Region 5 member)

##### 1.2 Apologies:

Frank Tuckwell, Julie Barrie

#### 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

N/A

### 3. MINUTES

**Recommendation: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 December 2019 in Goolwa be endorsed.**

**Moved:** Cr Qualman

**Seconded:** Cr Leng CEO Maher

**Carried unanimously.**

### 4. GUEST PRESENTER

Ken Scott, A/Director, Aboriginal Partnerships at the MDBA, presented on the work of MDBA's Aboriginal Partnerships team (Attachment 1).

### 5. REPORTS

#### 5.1 CEO's Report – Emma Bradbury

Verbal report provided before lunch break (Attachment 2).

Written report provided by the CEO following the meeting:

##### Item 1:

- In line with MDA's Strategic Plan, we have now employed a dedicated Grants and Policy Officer. Gemma Wilson commenced with the MDA in December 2019.
- After success in obtaining funding through the MDBEDP (Round 1) for the Basin Communities Leadership Program in 2019, the following grant applications have been submitted for Round 2.
  - Basin Communities Leadership Program 2.0
    - Delivery of a high-level leadership program delivered across 15 of the 31 eligible and identified MDBED (Round 2) communities.
  - Regional Economic Diversification Program
    - Establishment of a network of 6 place-based Regional Development Officers who will draw on local knowledge and experience to develop Regional Economic Diversification Plans across the identified MDBED (Round 2) communities.
  - Next Generation Mental Health First Aid Program
    - Delivery of a Mental Health First Aid Course to Basin youth, via a nationally accredited provider, across 10 specified MDBEDP (Round 2) communities.
- The MDA is pleased to have received written support for the above projects from the following organisations, councils and individuals: CSIRO, Moree Plains Shire Council (NSW), NRM Regions Queensland, Narromine Shire Council, Balonne Shire Council (QLD,) Rural City of Murray Bridge (SA), Berri Barmera Council, Wentworth Shire Council (NSW), Brewarrina Shire Council (NSW), Senator Senator Perin Davey (NSW), Coorong Council (SA), Tony Pasi MP (SA), Mid Murray Council (SA).

##### Item 2

In response to concerns raised by councils in the far west NSW the MDA has written to Minister Pavey to encourage her continuing protection of first flush flows by maintaining the embargo on pumping for sufficient time to ensure the effective recharge of the Barwon Darling system, and to urge for completion of the WRPs to inter alia provide certainty and regulation of provisions for floodplain harvesting.

##### Item 3

MDA has written to the Ministerial Council and to BOC to encourage their immediate attention to ensuring sound strategic leadership of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority by filling the vacancies on the board, particularly the Chair at their earliest opportunity.

#### **Item 4**

National President David Thurley and I will be in Canberra next week for a range of meetings. Report to follow.

#### **5.2 Chair's Report – Cr Melissa Rebbeck**

Verbal report provided before lunch break (Attachment 3).

#### **5.3 Strategic Advisory Group Report – Mayor Lewis**

Verbal report provided before lunch break:

- **Name change from MDA to MDLGA**

The decision is now with the board.

- **External funding**

MDA is proposing to receive drought funding but the Strategic Advisory Group expressed concerns that the MDA should not be reliant on funding support in order not to lose its identity. Instead the Strategic Advisory Group proposed a ratio of 60/40 or 70/30 where the majority of funding is based on membership funding and the remainder on grant funding. This ensures that the MDA is actively seeking membership funding, can remain independent and can deliver member supported actions. The decision is now with the board.

**Motion:** That MDA-R6 request the minutes of the Strategic Advisory Group be placed on the MDA website.

**Moved:** Cr Leng

**Seconded:** CEO Maher

**Carried unanimously.**

#### **5.4 Murray Darling Basin Authority Report – Ken Scott**

The MDBA report was provided as powerpoint presentation after lunch (Attachment 4).

#### **5.5 Secretariat Report – Monika Rhodes**

Verbal report provided on the work carried out since December 2019:

- Overview of the review of MDB constraints modelling report
- Responding to queries from and supporting the Chair
- Responding to MDA briefing papers
- Monthly MDA R6 Board Reports
- AGM and voting preparations
- Updating members on MDA business, regular media updates; forwarding reports, etc
- Sending out the Symposium report to participants
- Agendas, minutes, actions.
- Collating MDA Region 6 climate change positions: It was noted that the CEO asked the EO to retract the draft Region 6 climate change positions provided by Tatiara, Southern Mallee and Alexandrina that were sent out as attachments to the agenda. A discussion followed on the need for the MDA to step up climate change awareness across the basin.

**Motion:** That Region 6 Chair raise more awareness and discussions on the need to address climate change at the MDA board level.

**Moved:** Cr Leng

**Seconded:** Mayor Lewis

**Carried unanimously.**

## 5.6 Member Reports

- Keith enquired on where we are with the Lake Albert connection to the Coorong. Cr Leng replied that this is currently under review from the Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin.  
**Action arising: The Chair to ask Angus MacGregor for an update on the Lake Albert connection.**

## 6. GENERAL BUSINESS

### 6.1 2020 Strategic Directions and Work Plan

**Recommendation:** That MDA-R6 endorses the 2020 Strategic Directions and Work Plan.

**Moved:** Mayor Lewis

**Seconded:** Cr Qualmann

**Carried unanimously.**

### 6.2 Action List

**Recommendation:** That the current MDA-R6 Executive and Ordinary Meeting action lists be consolidated into one document to reflect the 2020 Strategic Directions and Work Plan.

**Moved:** Heather Barclay

**Seconded:** Cr Leng

**Carried unanimously.**

## 7. OTHER BUSINESS ARISING

### 7.1 For noting:

- **MDA Basin Community Leadership Program – Lower Lakes:**  
To be held on 26 & 27 May 2020; Alexandrina Council.
- **Town hall meeting with Inspector General in Langhorne Creek:** Tuesday, 3 March 2020 (time and venue TBC) ([https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/inquiry-murray-darling-basin?tool=news\\_feed#tool\\_tab](https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/inquiry-murray-darling-basin?tool=news_feed#tool_tab)):  
To register interest in attending a session, email [igmdb@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:igmdb@agriculture.gov.au) indicating our preferred location.
- [Murray–Darling Basin Compliance Compact Assurance Report 2019](#)
- [MDBA Reconciliation Statement December 2019.](#)

### 7.2 Correspondence

- Email correspondence was provided as part of the agenda.

## 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 8.1 Confirmation of Region 6 membership

**Action arising:** That Heather Barclay to contact Jason Taylor from Southern Mallee District Council, and the Chair to contact Cr Hannemann from Tatiara District Council to confirm their membership and involvement into MDA Region 6.

## **8.2 Involvement of MDA Region 6 as key stakeholders for the Lower Murray, Lakes & Coorong region**

**Motion:** That a letter be sent to the new Basin Community Committee Chair (MDBA) that MDA Region 6 to be involved in any future engagement as a key stakeholder for the Lower Murray, Lakes & Coorong region.

**Moved:** Cr Scott

**Seconded:** Cr Henderson

**Carried.**

**Action arising:** Alexandrina Council to communicate with MDBA.

## **8.3 Guest speaker:**

**Action arising:** To invite Ben Fee from RDA Riverland as guest speaker.

## **8.4 Inter-regional meeting:**

- **Action arising:** That Mayor Keith Parkes, via SAROC, request support from LGA to hold another Inter-regional meeting.
- **Action arising:** That the Chair will propose at the next MDA Board Meeting for a Region other than Region 6 to organise the next South Australian Inter-regional meeting.

## **9. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

The schedule of MDA Region 6 meetings was confirmed as per item 7.1:

- **15 May 2020: Tailem Bend (Coorong District Council)**
  - Executive meeting: 9 – 10 am
  - Ordinary meeting: 10.30 am – 2.30 pm.
- **7 August 2020: Goolwa (Alexandrina Council)**
  - Executive meeting: 9 – 10 am
  - Ordinary meeting: 10.30 am – 2.30 pm.
- **6 November 2020: Murray Bridge (Rural City of Murray Bridge)**
  - Executive meeting: 9 – 10 am
  - Ordinary meeting: 10.30 am – 2.30 pm.
- **5 February 2021: Tailem Bend (Coorong District Council)**
  - Executive meeting: 9.30 – 10.30 am
  - AGM: 11am – 12pm
  - Ordinary meeting: 12.30 – 3.30pm.

**The 2020/21 calendar for MDA- Region 6 (dates amended 9 April 2020 due do Covid-19)**

DATE	EVENT	NOTES
14 February 2020	R6 AGM & Ordinary Meeting	Topic: set region direction for 2020
12-13 March	MDA Strategic Planning Workshop	R6 attendance TBD
15 May 2020	R6 Ordinary Meeting	Topic: Drought Preparedness Member councils to share info re use of Federal drought funds Seek relevant guest speaker *Forward planning for National Conference motions
26-27 May 2020 – POSTPONED	Basin Communities Leadership Program (BCLP) – Lower Lakes	Lead: Alexandrina
June/July 2020 – DATE: TBA	EM & Inter-Regional Tour of CLLMM	Lead: TBD, liaise with MDA Primary audience = Members & EMs of R6 member councils; Secondary audience = Members of upstream regions; BCLP Cohort
7 August 2020	R6 Ordinary Meeting	Topic: Consider National Conference motions
12-14 August 2020 – POSTPONED	MDA AGM National Conference	R6 attendance TBD
Sept/Oct 2020 – DATE TBA	Annual R6 Stakeholder Symposium	Lead: Executive Officer Outcomes of Lower Lakes Independent Science Review + Shared Vision Statement + Drought Preparedness
6 November 2020	R6 Ordinary Meeting	Topic: TBD
5 February 2021	R6 AGM & Ordinary Meeting	Topic: Set region direction for 2021

R6 Meetings
R6 Events
MDA Meetings/Events

10. **CLOSE** (3.30pm)

*The Murray Darling Association acknowledges and thanks Rural City of Murray Bridge for its support in hosting this meeting of Region 6 – Lower Murray, Lakes and Coorong.*

**2020/2021 REGION 6 MEMBERSHIP**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Member of Executive</b>	<b>Voting Member</b>
<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Melissa Rebbeck	Alexandrina		
<b>Secretariat</b>	Monika Rhodes	Alexandrina		
<b>Council Representatives</b>	Mayor Brenton Lewis	Murray Bridge		
	Heather Barclay	Murray Bridge		
	Stephen Packer	Murray Bridge		
	CEO Bridget Mather	Coorong District		
	Councillor Vern Leng	Coorong District		
	Councillor Brenton Qualmann	Coorong District		
	Glenn Rappensberg	Alexandrina		
	Councillor Michael Scott	Alexandrina		
	Councillor Marilyn Henderson	Victor Harbor		
	Councillor Miles Hannemann	Tatiara District		
	CEO Jason Taylor	Southern Mallee		
<b>Individual Members</b>	Keith Loeser			
	Julie Barrie			
	Frank Tuckwell			
	Bruce Brooks			
	Adrian Pederick, MP JP			

Attachment 1

# Overview of Aboriginal Partnerships in MDBA

14 February 2019

Ken Scott

Assistant Director Aboriginal Partnerships



Australian Government







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## Acknowledgement

**The MDBA acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Owners, and their Nations, of the Murray-Darling Basin, who have a deep cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to their lands and waters. The MDBA understands the need for recognition of Traditional Owner knowledge and cultural values in natural resource management, associated with the Basin.**

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# Overview

- Background
- Projects and Initiatives
- Cultural flows

**Background**

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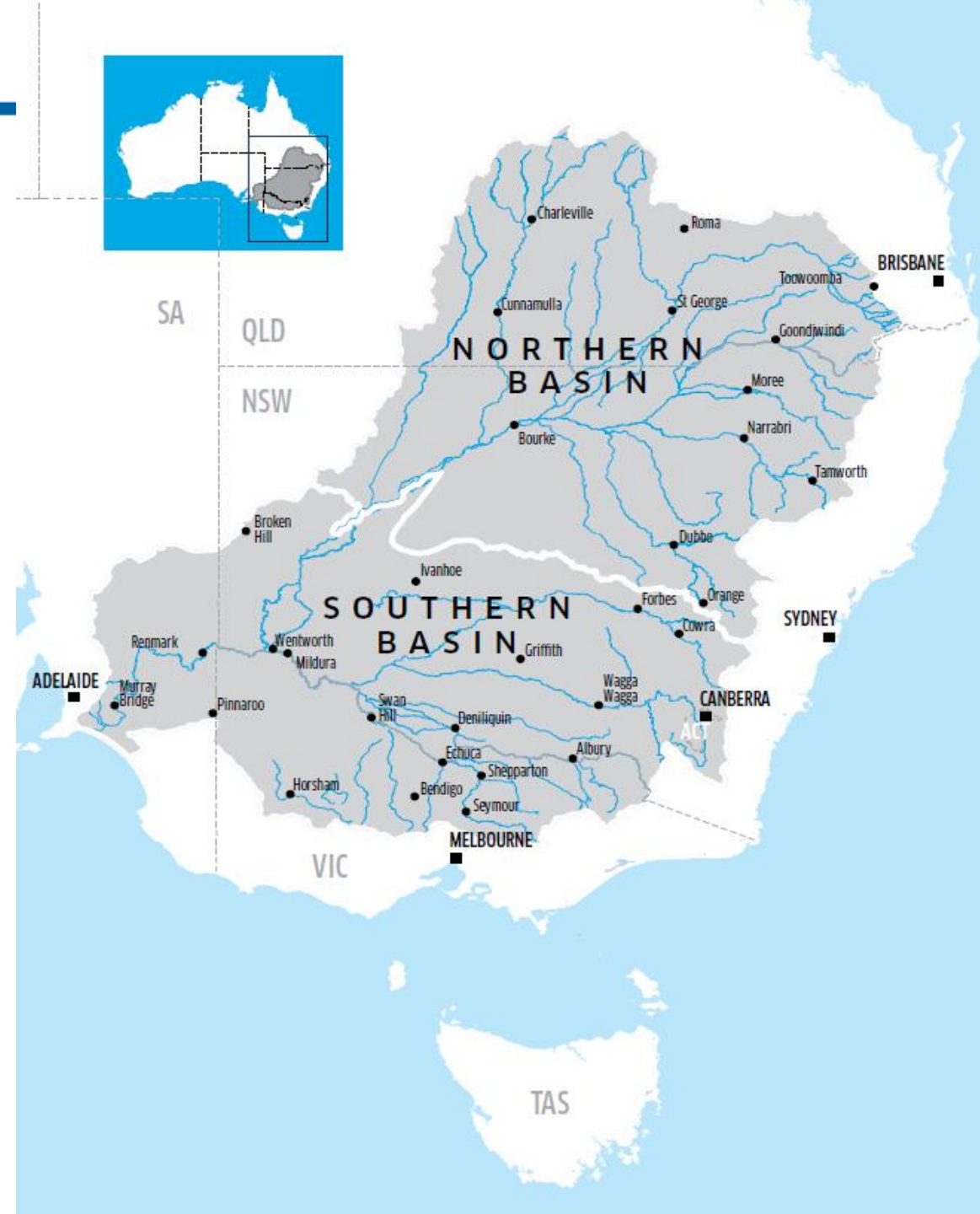
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# Aboriginal Partnerships

- A team in the MDBA that:
  - Provides information to, and obtains advice from, First Nations people, on Basin Plan implementation matters (especially through representative bodies).
  - Provides advice to internal teams on best-practice Aboriginal engagement.



# Southern Basin vs. Northern Basin

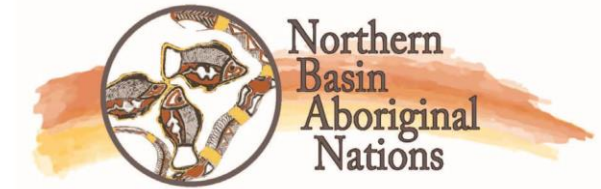




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# Aboriginal representative bodies

- Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations (NBAN)  
[www.nban.org.au](http://www.nban.org.au)
- Murray Lower Darling Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN)  
[www.mldrin.org.au](http://www.mldrin.org.au)



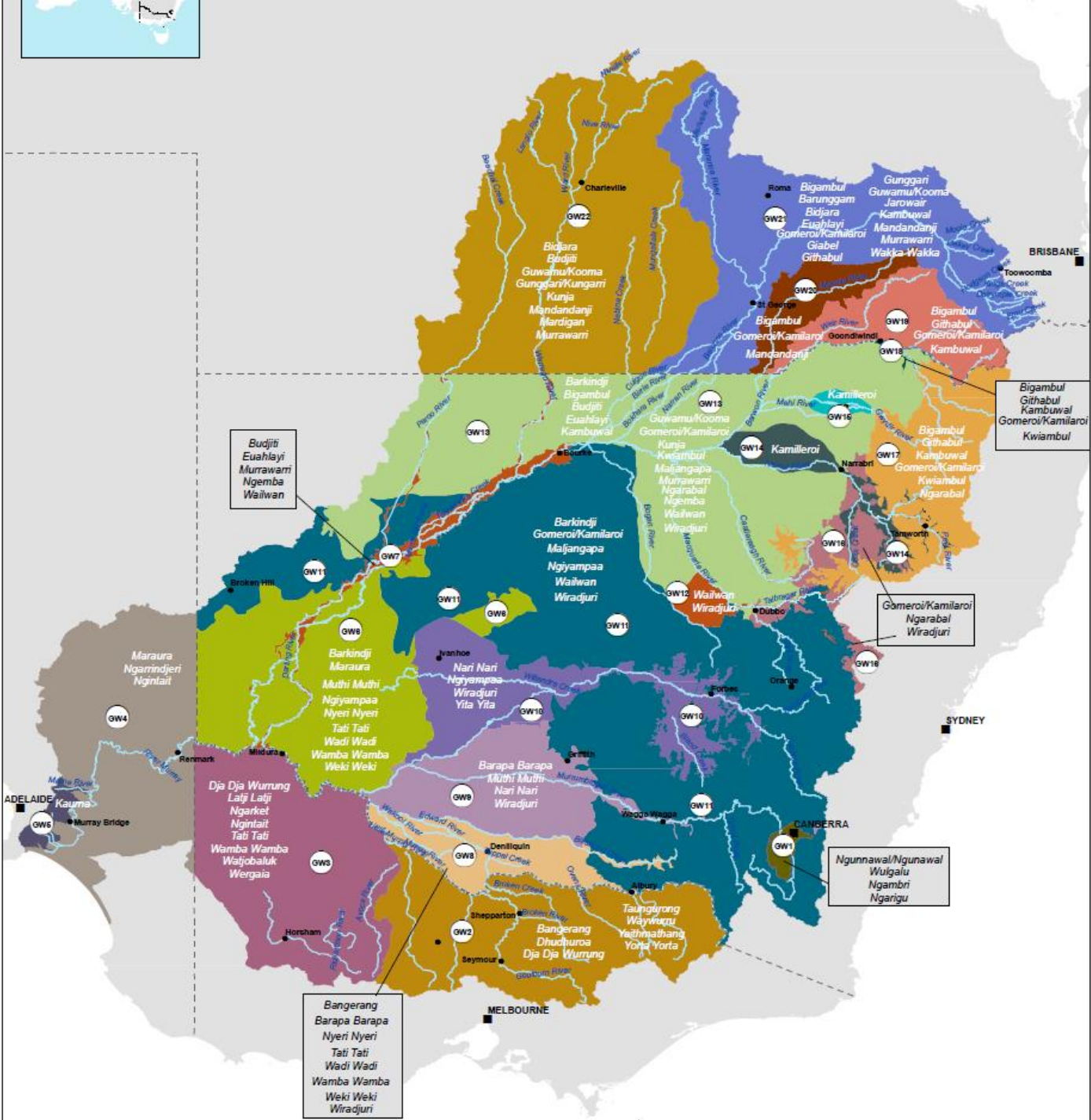
- Confederations of First Nations
- Governed by a board of directors; regular board meetings and ‘full gatherings’
- Funding from MDBA

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# Timeline

- **1915** River Murray Agreement
- **1987** Murray-Darling Basin Agreement and establishment of Murray-Darling Basin Commission
- **1992** Mabo judgement
- **1998** Formation of MLDRIN (during the Yorta Yorta Native Title Case)
- **2006** MLDRIN Memorandum of Understanding signed with Murray–Darling Basin Commission
- **2007** Water Act commences; establishment of MDBA
- **2009** First meeting of NBAN
- **2012** Basin Plan commences (requires consultation with TOs by Basin states for WRPs)
- **2017-current** NBAN and MLDRIN assess WRP consultation undertaken by Basin states

# Traditional Owners in the Murray-Darling Basin





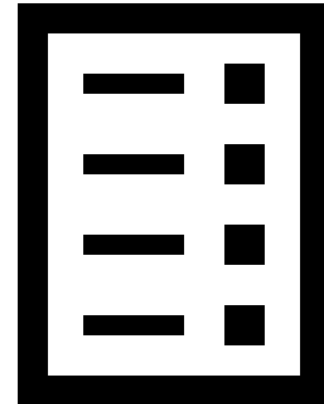
# Projects and initiatives



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## Assessment of Water Resource Plans

- Basin Plan (Chapter 10, Part 14) requires Basin States to engage with TOs regarding Indigenous values and uses of water, and objectives and outcomes relating to water management.
- MDBA seeks advice from MLDRIN and NBAN on whether consultation done by the States was adequate.
- All SA WRPs complete (now in implementation phase).



## Aboriginal Weather Watcher's Project

*The purpose of the Aboriginal Weather Watchers Project is to record the impacts of weather on the everyday lives of Aboriginal people in the Murray-Darling Basin, and explore the impact of weather on Aboriginal uses and values of water-dependent natural resources.*

<https://www.mdba.gov.au/publications/mdba-reports/aboriginal-weather-watchers-project>



A group of six emus is walking across a dry, open landscape. The ground is reddish-brown and appears to be a dry riverbed or a similar natural water source. In the foreground, there is a small, shallow puddle of water. The background consists of sparse, dry trees and shrubs under a clear blue sky. The overall scene conveys a sense of aridity and drought.

*“It’s been depressing in how little rain we have”*

Participant, Geurie, NSW

*“If I know Country is dry you don’t want to visit sites”*

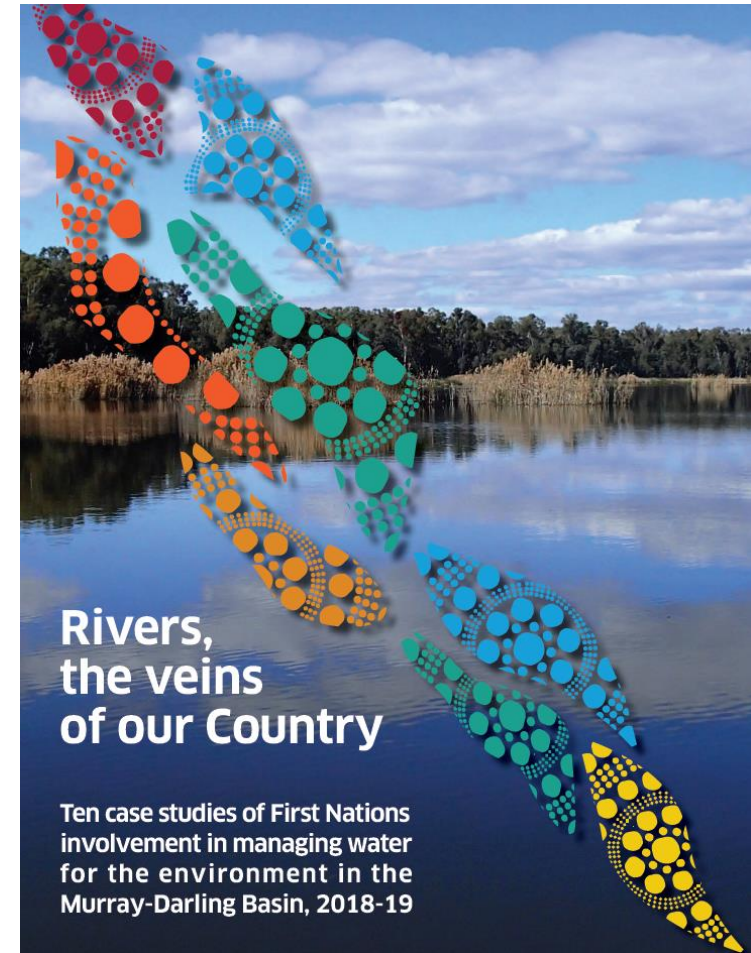
Participant, Charleville, QLD



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# First Nations Participation in Environmental Watering

- Projects with CEWO, NBAN and MLDRIN to allow First Nations input into setting environmental watering priorities for 2020-21.
- First Nations participated in review of Basin-wide Watering Strategy.
- Ministerial directive requiring MDBA to report on how First Nations people have been involved in environmental watering.
  - *First report (for 2018-19) published on 2 January 2020.*



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# Community of Practice for Aboriginal Engagement

- Informal group of Aboriginal engagement practitioners being established.
- Purpose: share information, build Aboriginal water policy skills and identify gaps and opportunities across Aboriginal engagement in the Murray-Darling Basin.
- Membership to include government staff, MLDRIN and NBAN representatives, Basin Community Committee members and local TOs.
- First meeting possibly in Murray Bridge & Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park in late March.



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# Basin Plan Evaluation

- 2020 and 2025
- First Nations involvement in creating an evaluation 'platform', revising evaluation questions, and reviewing and interpreting results
- Capacity building and increasing involvement towards 2025



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# Native Fish Management Strategy

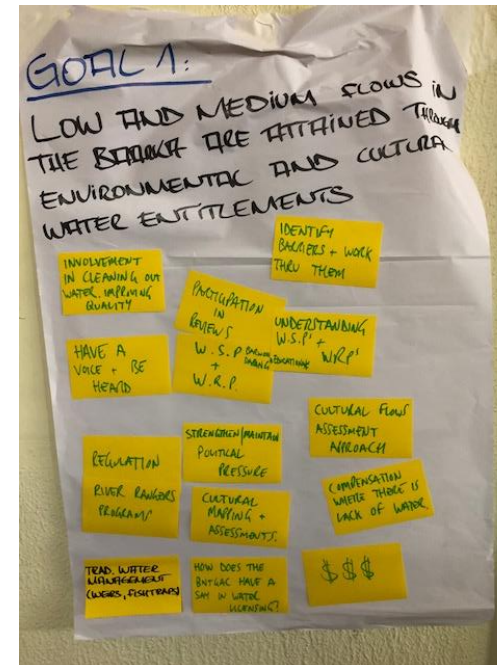
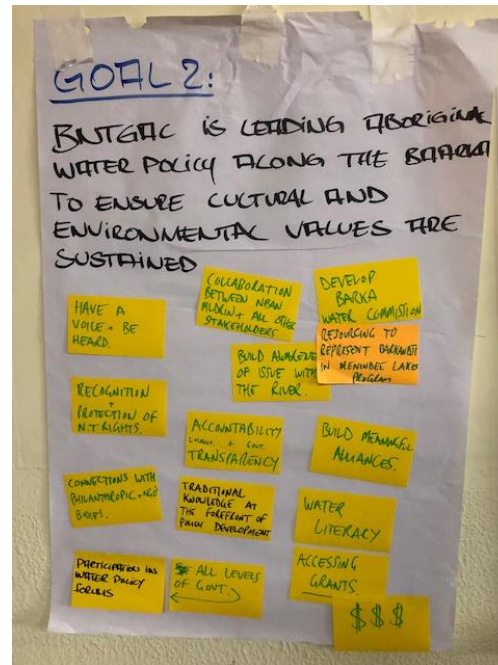
- \$5m in response to mass fish deaths in Lower Darling 12 months ago
- Objective: protect and restore native fish populations over the longer term
- Cultural Advisory Group
- Menindee and St George fish hatcheries (TO involvement)





# Natural and Cultural Resource Management Planning

- Healthy Country Planning (open standards for conservation management)
  - *Barkandji (NSW)*
  - *Yorta Yorta (SA)*
  - *Gayini Nimmie-Caira (NSW)*
  - *Others*



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# Ranger Programs

- Commonwealth Government (Working on Country; National Indigenous Australians Agency)
- State governments.
- MDBA has an interest in River Rangers.



*Gerard Community Cultural Rangers*

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# The Living Murray

- One of Australia's largest river restoration projects. Has been running for 15 years.
- Southern basin, 5 river systems, 6 icon sites - over 2,000km of River Murray channel and 135,000 hectares of nationally and internationally important wetland and floodplains.
- Southern Connected Basin Environmental Watering Committee (SCBEWC) facilitates and coordinates large-scale watering actions across five e-water holders, and makes decisions on joint portfolios and program elements (TLM)
- Over \$1billion of joint government funds invested in 500 GL of water and environmental works since 2003. Joint programs invest ~\$14 million a year to run the program.



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES

CANBERRA

ADELAIDE

VICTORIA

MELBOURNE

Great Darling Anabranch

Darling

Lachlan River

Murrumbidgee River

Edward River

Wakool R

Murray River

Goulburn River

Loddon River

Renmark

Wentworth

Mildura

Blanchetown

Murray Bridge

Wellington Goolwa

Murray Mouth, Coorong & Lower Lakes

Meningie

Chowilla Floodplains & Lindsay-Wallpolla Islands

Gunbower-Koondrook-Perricoota Forest

Barmah-Millewa Forest

Wagga Wagga

Swan Hill

Deniliquin

Echuca

Albury-Wodonga

4

3

2

1

5

6

Murray River Channel (Icon Site 6)

0 50 km

N





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# Aboriginal Waterways Assessments

- MDBA adapted a Māori tool for assessing cultural health of waterways (in collaboration with NBAN and MLDRIN).
- The purpose of the project was to develop a tool that consistently measures and prioritises river and wetland health so that Traditional Owners can more effectively participate in water planning and management.
- Nations are now using AWAs for cultural flows projects and other initiatives. MLDRIN and NBAN have the expertise and willingness to facilitate AWAs on behalf of governments and Nations.



# What's good about AWAs?



Produce accurate, accessible and useful information



Prevent further loss of Traditional Owners' knowledge



Are good for people's health and wellbeing



Enable Traditional Owners with limited knowledge of Country to contribute to river and wetland health assessment



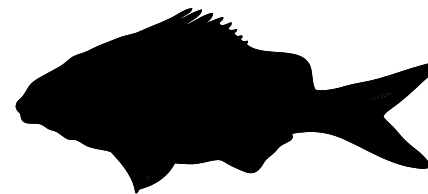
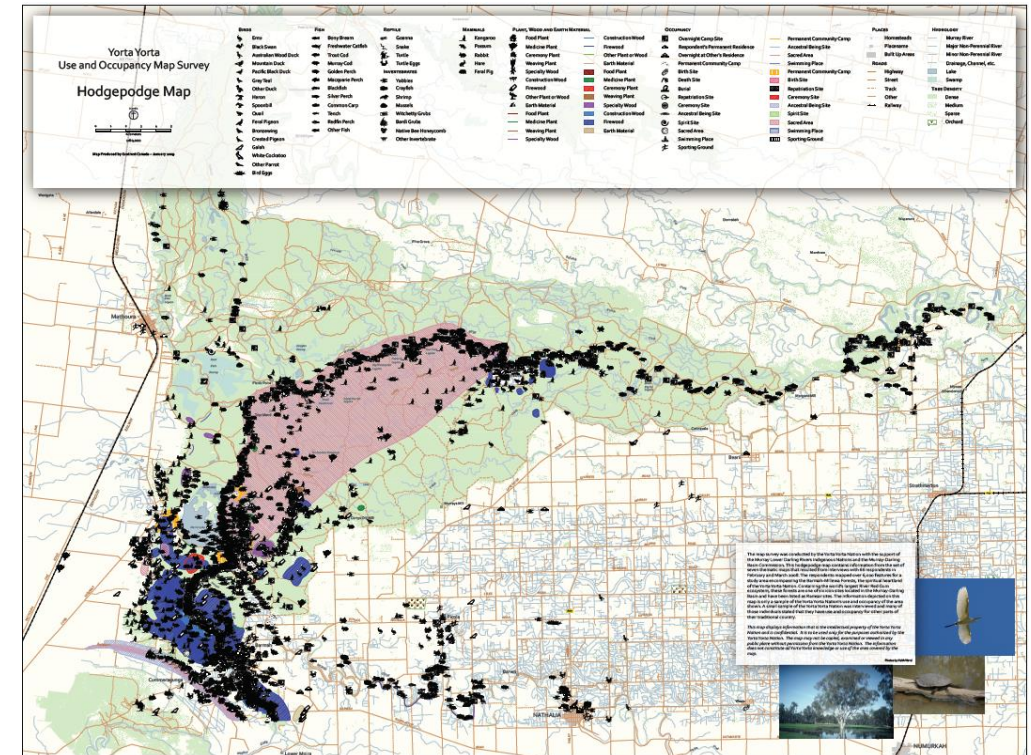
Increase confidence in using knowledge in water planning and management environments



Collect and record local knowledge for Nations

# Use and Occupancy Mapping

- Mapping that helps Aboriginal people document the many ways in which they currently use land. Individuals identify significant sites such as death sites, repatriation sites, gathering sites and activities they undertake on Country such as wood gathering and hunting.
- MDBA facilitated the use of UOM throughout the Basin, including testing of the methodology by Ngarrindjeri.



# Cultural flows

The right side of the slide features a decorative graphic composed of several overlapping, semi-transparent blue shapes. These shapes are primarily triangular and trapezoidal, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The colors range from a light sky blue to a deep, solid blue. The shapes appear to be layered, with some overlapping others, creating a sense of depth and movement.



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# Cultural flows

*“Water entitlements that are legally and beneficially owned by Indigenous Nations of a sufficient and adequate quantity and quality to improve the spiritual, cultural, environmental, social and economic conditions of those Indigenous Nations. This is our inherent right”.*

- The Echuca Declaration (2007)



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# Cultural flows example



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# Mandate

- Not in Water Act
- Not in Basin Plan

But...

- Bipartisan support ('deal sheet')
- Significant community support and expectations



# Environmental flows

Environmental flows are used to improve the health of our rivers, wetlands and floodplains. Water is allocated to federal and state environmental water holders across the Basin, who make decisions about when, where and how much water is released for the **environment**, and with measurable **environmental outcomes** in mind.



## Water for the environment

Water for the environment maintains and improves the health of rivers by providing water to protect plants, animals and iconic landscapes that rely on rivers.

Healthy rivers support communities and agriculture to thrive.

Many of the rivers and wetlands in the Murray-Darling Basin have been modified to provide water for towns, industries and to grow food. In some rivers, up to half of the water that would have naturally flowed down them each year is removed for human use.

As a result many rivers are not able to function as they would naturally. This means it is necessary to actively manage how water flows through rivers.

Water flows that meet environmental needs are called 'water for the environment'. Water for the environment keeps rivers healthy for every living person, plant and animal in the Basin.

Water for the environment is set aside in storages and released into rivers and wetlands to support them and the plants and animals that live, feed and breed in them.

## Benefits of water for the environment

Water for the environment improves the health of rivers by providing water to support important ecosystems that improve water quality, like wetlands and floodplains.

Water for the environment also provides benefits to communities by:

- increasing opportunities for recreational activities such as fishing, boating and birdwatching
- improving water quality which has economic benefits for farmers and industries, like manufacturing
- protecting Australia's iconic landscapes for this and future generations to enjoy.

## Key facts

Water for the environment aims to provide enough water to keep rivers healthy. Healthy rivers benefit everyone.



Water is used for towns, industry and agriculture.



Water for the environment is set aside to protect the plants, animals and iconic landscapes of the Basin.



Over 60 native fish species rely on rivers in the Basin to feed, grow and breed.



The Basin is home to 120 waterbird species that depend on rivers to feed, nest and breed.



30,000 wetlands in the Basin filter water which improves water quality.



Environmental flows keep our rivers healthy and sustain plants, animals and fish – which is also important to Aboriginal Nations.

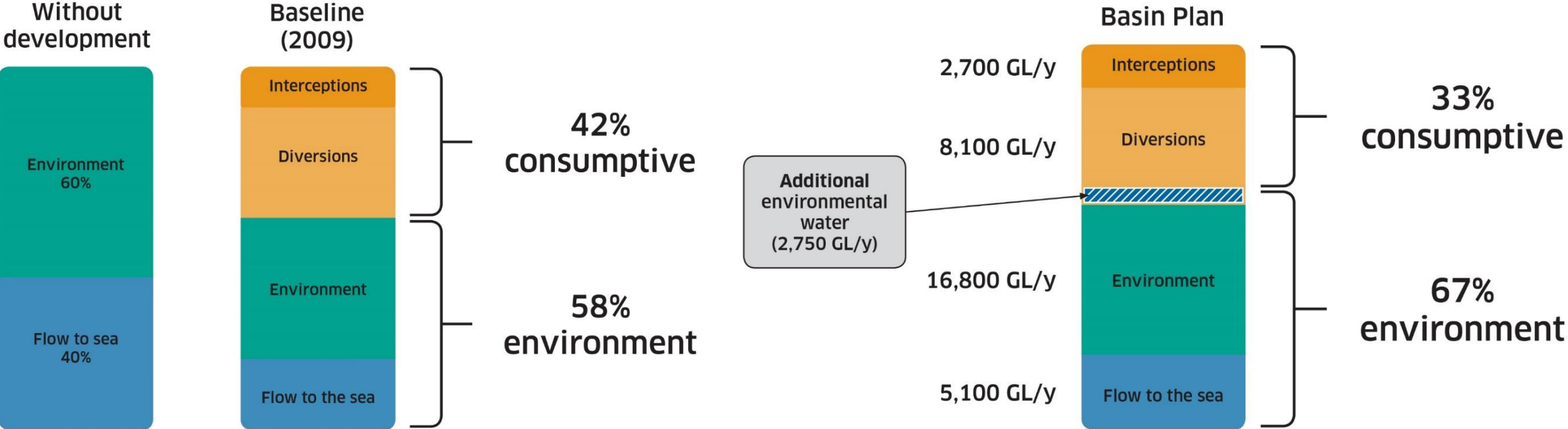


Water for the environment supports tourism and recreational activities.



Good-quality water powers \$24 billion of primary production across the Basin every year.

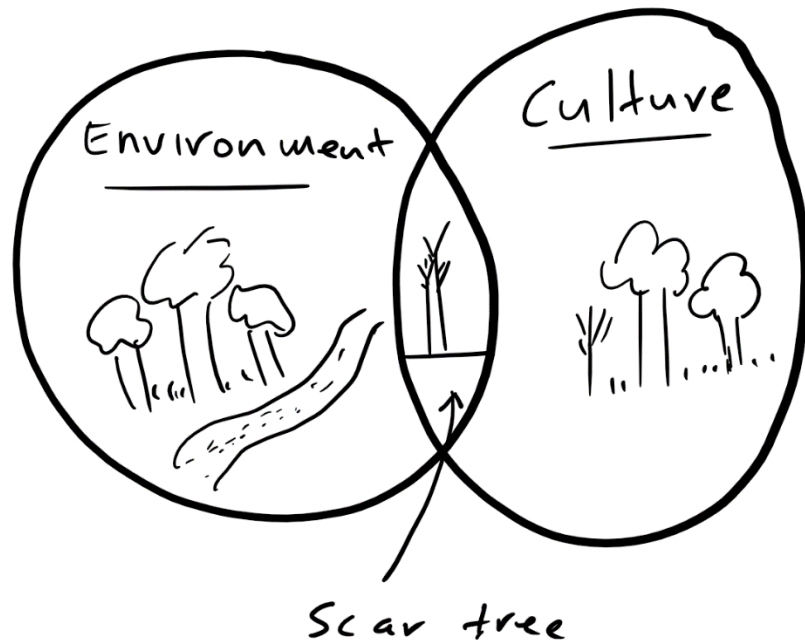
# Consumptive pool & water for environment



# Cultural flows are NOT environmental flows...

*“Cultural water is different from environmental water. Environmental water cannot achieve the wellbeing, social and economic outcomes that a cultural flow can.”*

– P. Sullivan, pers. comm. 2017 (NCFRP Research Partner - Murrawarri)



...But there may be “shared” or overlapping benefits.



# Environmental flows vs. cultural flows

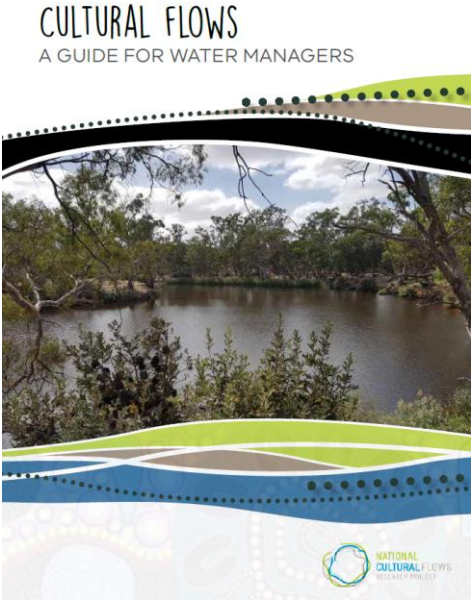
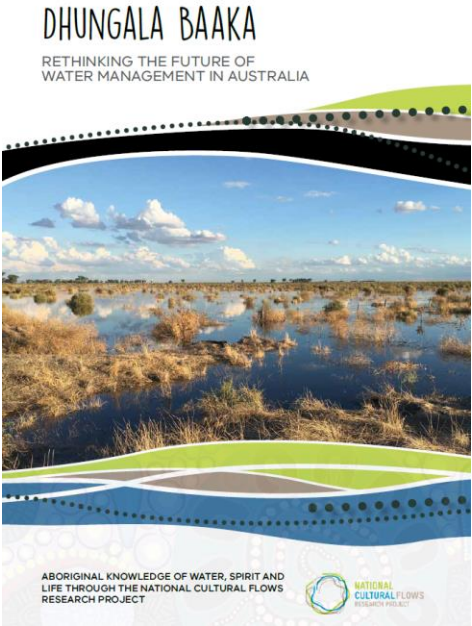
	Environmental flows	Cultural flows
Priorities identified by...	Governments (recently also with Aboriginal people)	Aboriginal people
Benefits for...	The environment	Aboriginal people (social, economic, environmental, cultural and spiritual outcomes)
Water rights held by...	State/Commonwealth water holders (e.g. CEWO)	Aboriginal people



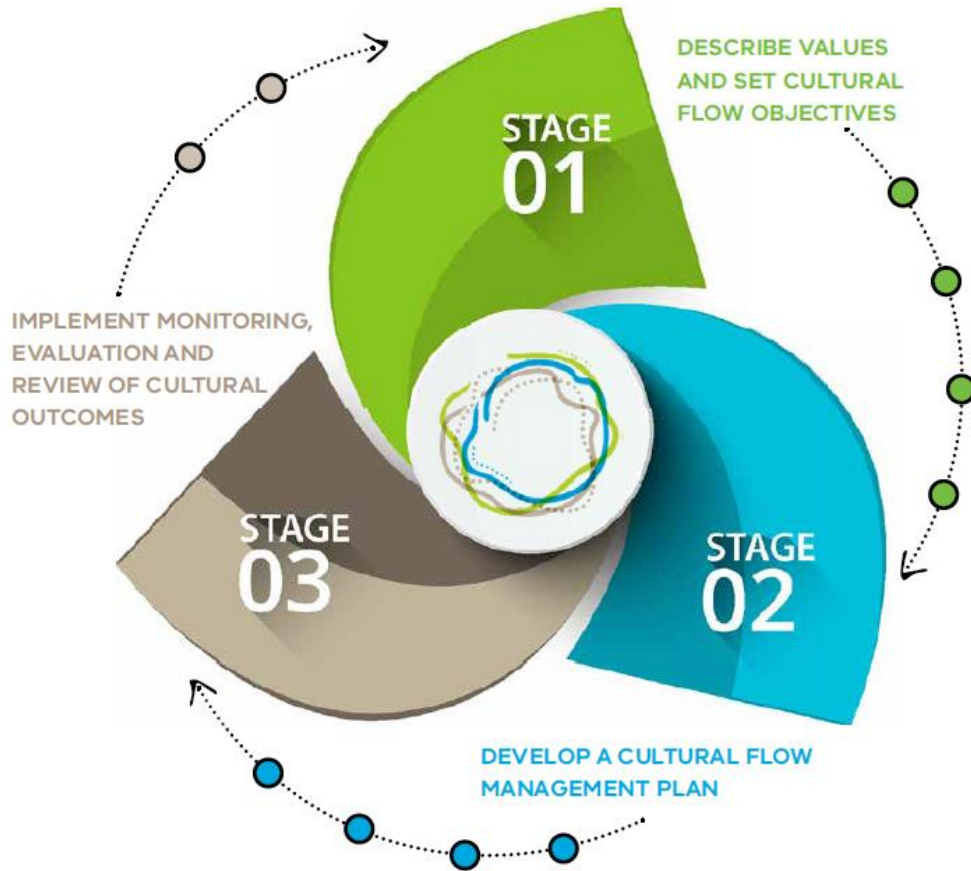
Shared benefits

# National Cultural Flows Research Project

[www.culturalflows.com.au](http://www.culturalflows.com.au)



# Cultural flows assessment



## DESCRIBE VALUES AND SET CULTURAL FLOW OBJECTIVES

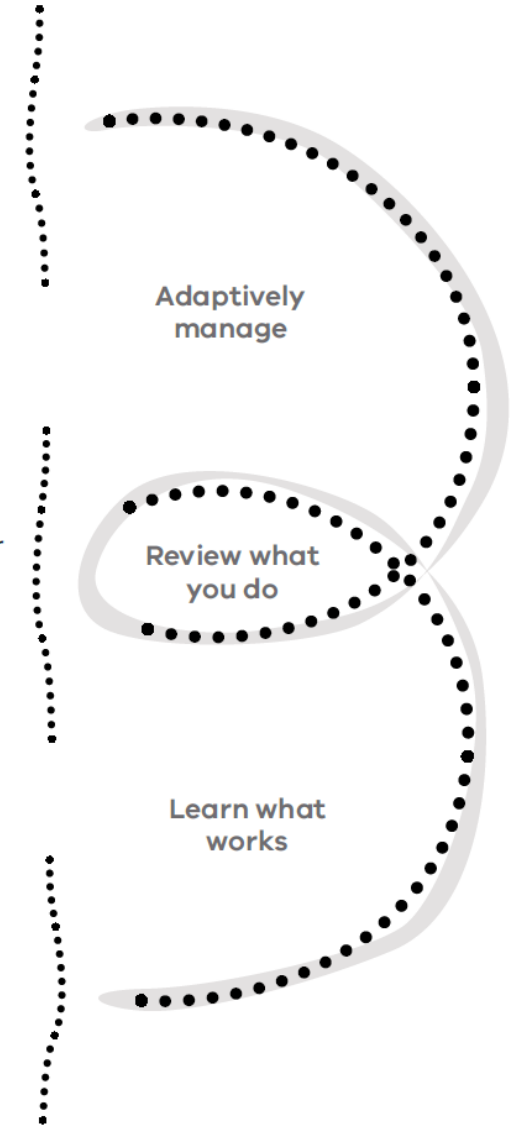
- STEP 1 Getting started
- STEP 2 Identify values
- STEP 3 Build a conceptual model
- STEP 4 Set objectives

## DEVELOP A CULTURAL FLOW MANAGEMENT PLAN

- STEP 5 Summarise the cultural character
- STEP 6 Confirm conceptual relationship
- STEP 7 Determine water requirements
- STEP 8 Prepare A cultural flows management plan

## IMPLEMENT MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF OUTCOMES

- STEP 9 Select what to measure
- STEP 10 Collect and analyse data, evaluate and review outcomes



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## Deal Sheet

- \$1.5m and two project officers (one each in MLDRIN and NBAN, for 3 years) to *“translate the findings of the National Cultural Flows Research Project into practical and effective ways forward”*.
- \$40m for purchase of cultural and economic water entitlements (and associated planning activities).



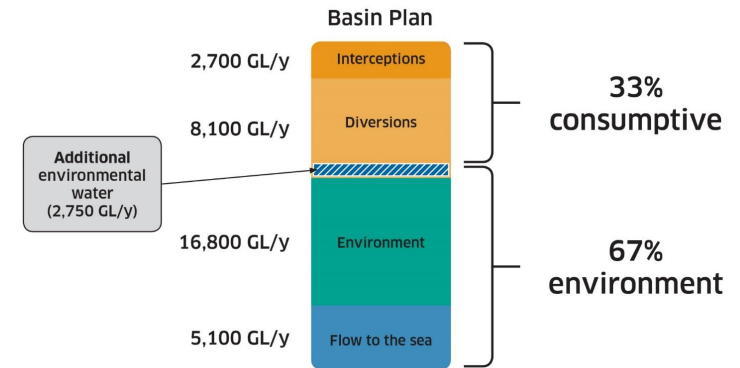
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# Cultural Flows Project Officers

- NBAN Project Officer: Sonia Yeung (Toowoomba)
  - Nation Planning Workshops in 4 Nations in 2019 (three workshops per Nation).
  - Continuation of workshops in 2020, focus on comms.
- MLDRIN Project Officer: Lauren Houthuysen (Melbourne)
  - Scoping of TO interest, capacity and existing tools in 2019.
  - 3 x Aboriginal Waterways Assessments planned for Wiradjuri Country in 2020.

# Where will the water come from?

- Purchase from water market (including through the Commonwealth Aboriginal Water Entitlements Program).
- State policy arrangements e.g. Aboriginal Cultural Water Access Licences (NSW), provisions in water resource plans.
- Private partnerships.



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# Aboriginal Water Entitlements Program

- \$40m for purchase of water entitlements by Aboriginal people in the Basin
  - *Economic purposes*
  - *Cultural purposes*
- Program design phase



# Fact sheet



## Cultural flows

Water is vital to Australia's First Nations. First Nation people have a spiritual obligation to care for surface water and groundwater resources, as part of their commitment to caring for Country.

First Nations are the Australian Aboriginal peoples or Aboriginal nations of people who were there from the beginning, prior to the settlement of other peoples or nations.

Cultural flows are water entitlements that are legally owned and managed by First Nations to improve the spiritual, cultural, environmental, social and economic conditions of these Nations.

Cultural flows are not consistently part of the water management system in Australia, and achieving this will take time.

## Cultural flows and water for the environment are different

Water for the environment keeps our rivers healthy and sustains plants, animals and fish. River health is important to First Nations, but water for the environment and cultural flows are different.

Cultural flows have a range of other objectives, including improving the spiritual, cultural, environmental and economic conditions of First Nations.

Cultural flows benefit practical activities like fishing, hunting, ceremonies and harvesting medicinal plants and herbs. Cultural flows also preserve and protect important assets including burial mounds, scarred trees, and campsites which helps to maintain connections to Country.

Identity, wellbeing, capacity building and intergenerational teaching are also key components of cultural flows.

## Key facts

Water is vital to Aboriginal culture, spirituality, identity and wellbeing.



There are more than **40 First Nations** in the Basin.



First Nations are **involved in water planning and management**.



Dedicated cultural flows are **not currently part of the water management system in Australia**.



The Murray-Darling Basin Authority is committed to supporting the **establishment of dedicated cultural flows**.



The Australian Government has committed **\$40 million** to establish and support First Nations investment in cultural and economic water entitlements and associated activities within the Basin.



**Dedicated cultural flows** will help achieve meaningful cultural outcomes for First Nations.

## Aboriginal partnerships

First Nations in the Basin are involved in water research, planning and management through equitable, inclusive and respectful partnerships.

The health of the Basin benefits from meaningful partnerships with First Nations and all Basin governments.

## Commitment to change

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) is committed to supporting the establishment of dedicated cultural flows.

Collaborative partnerships between the MDBA, First Nations and Basin governments will explore ways of integrating cultural flows as a part of water management in the Basin.

The Australian Government has committed \$40 million of funding to establish a water investment program that supports Aboriginal communities to plan for and implement cultural and economic entitlements.

## MLDRIN and NBAN

The Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) and the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations (NBAN) are the two peak First Nation-based organisations in the Basin with a primary focus on natural resource management.

MLDRIN and NBAN comprise of Traditional Owner nominated representatives from Aboriginal Nations across the Basin.

The MDBA works with MLDRIN and NBAN on a number of projects to ensure First Nations within the Basin contribute to water management and planning.

Their knowledge makes them invaluable partners in water management across the Basin. They contribute to water research, policy and management.

## National Cultural Flows Research Project

The National Cultural Flows Research Project, a project driven by and for Aboriginal people has, over seven years, sought to establish a national framework for cultural flows.

The framework, released in 2018, provides the first guide and method for future planning, delivery, and

assessment of cultural flows. This research is thought to be the first robust legislative and policy framework for cultural flows anywhere in the world.

The project provides a framework that enables Aboriginal cultural water use and values to be described and measured in quantifiable water volumes for the first time.

The project recommends future work to build capacity in Aboriginal communities to advocate for and manage cultural flow allocations to protect Aboriginal values and interests in water.

This is the first step—developing a new Basin-wide approach to cultural flows will take time. Now, with this project, there is a clear and consistent method for determining, delivering and assessing cultural flows.

The planning and research committee for this project includes MLDRIN, NBAN and the Northern Australia Land and Sea Management Alliance. The MDBA was a proud contributor to this project and continues to support the future work of establishing cultural flows.

For more information on the project, visit [www.culturalflows.com.au](http://www.culturalflows.com.au)

The National Cultural Flows Research Project has clearly demonstrated it is possible to measure and deliver cultural flow outcomes.



### Connect with us.

The MDBA has offices in Adelaide, Albury-Wodonga, Canberra, Goondiwindi, Toowoomba, and regional engagement officers around the Basin.

1800 230 067

[engagement@mdba.gov.au](mailto:engagement@mdba.gov.au)

[mdba.gov.au](http://mdba.gov.au)



**Ken Scott**  
**Assistant Director Aboriginal Partnerships**  
**Adelaide**

**Phone: 02 6279 0195 or 0447 106 909**

**Email: [ken.scott@mdba.gov.au](mailto:ken.scott@mdba.gov.au)**

### **Office locations**

Adelaide

Albury-Wodonga

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 [mdba.gov.au](http://mdba.gov.au)  1800 630 114

 [engagement@mdba.gov.au](mailto:engagement@mdba.gov.au)



**Australian Government**



Attachment 2



## Chief Executive Officer's Report

February 2020

Emma Bradbury  
ceo@mda.asn.au

## 1. Appointments

Date	Event/meeting	Location
20/01/2020	Board Meeting 394	
20/01/2020	Meeting with Chris Bilkey – Mayor Murray Rivers Council	Echuca
21/01/2020	Malcolm Thompson – Discussions MDBA Chair	Telephone
23/01/2020	Town Hall Session with the Inspector General	Deniliquin
24/01/2020	Regional Diversification discussions – Brewarrina	Via Zoom
28/01/2020	Strategic Advisory Committee Meeting	Via Zoom
29/01/2020	National Indigenous Australian Agency	Echuca
29/01/2020	Region 4 Ordinary Meeting	Via Zoom
30/01/2020	Regional Diversification discussions – Wentworth	Via Zoom
30/01/2020	Regional Diversification discussions – Shepparton	Via Zoom
04/02/2020	Celine Steinfield - Wentworth Group – MDBA Roundtable	Via Zoom
05/02/2020	BCLP Discussions: Paul Childs, Jarrod Eaton and Iain Ellis	Via Zoom
06/02/2020	Mike Stewardson – One Basin CRC discussions	Telephone
07/02/2020	Angus Mackie – Minister Pavey’s Office	Via Zoom
10/02/2020	Adam O’Bied Advisor to Water Minister Anthony Lynham QLD	Telephone
10/02/2020	MDB roundtable discussions	Via Zoom
11/02/2020	Regional diversification discussions – Moree Regional Council	Via Zoom
13/02/2020	76 <sup>th</sup> National Conference Committee Meeting	Via Zoom
14/02/2020	Region 6 – AGM and Ordinary Meeting	Via Zoom

## 2. Basin Communities Leadership Project – BCLP

### Project Stages / Current status:

- Stage 1) Program Design and Development *[Underway – Progressing]*
- Stage 1a) Participant / Candidate Recruitment *[Underway – Progressing]*
- Stage 2) Leadership Program Delivery *[Awaiting completion of stage 1 / 1a]*
- Stage 3) Community Project Delivery Support *[Awaiting completion of stage 2]*
- Stage 4) Consolidation / Refurbishment / OILLS *[Awaiting completion of stage 3]*

### Progress Comments:

- A mature advertising and recruitment campaign has commenced with applications being made.
- Coordination of the venue bookings and support arrangements are underway.
- Some Councils have responded with their support – following up with those who have not yet responded.
- Training / Business Support Officer recruitment due FEB / MAR.

## Risks / Opportunities:

- Risks – successfully aligning all the guest presenters and support networks to synchronise / support dates across the 15 x locations.
- Risks – external support arrangements and requested materials / services meeting project timelines.

### 3. Discussions with Angus Mackie – Minister Pavey’s Office

- Invitation extended to Minister Pavey to attend the next Region 10 Meeting in late February.
- The MDA invited the Minister to support the funding application for the Regional Economic Diversification program
- The MDA notified the Department that the Board considered Minister Pavey’s request that we facilitate or host community level meetings with key councils and community leaders across South Australia. Board recommended that the Minister establish a joint approach with Minister Spiers, and that the MDA would be pleased to identify key personnel and community leaders.
- The MDA also enquired as to what the NSW Department is asking of Queensland in relation to the “First Flush Flows”.

### 4. Discussions with Adam O’Bied – Advisor – Minister Anthony Lynham Water Minister for QLD

- Adam O’Bied will be emailing a zoom calendar invite to discuss preparations of the written response to the letter sent to the Minister in relation to National Water Infrastructure – feasibility investment
- The MDA also discussed NSW section 324 orders and whether QLD have the same.

### 5. Memberships

The MDA have reached out to the [Cowra Council](#) to investigate the Council’s position in their consideration of joining the MDA as members.

A presentation to Council was conducted by Cr Phyllis Miller (R10) Chair and CEO.

Paul Devery has advised that a report to the Council will be completed by the end of the month

### 6. 2020 76<sup>th</sup> National Conference – Shepparton – Victoria

Venues have been secured for the [Conference](#) and [Gala Dinner Event](#).

Logistics for the Study Tour to Barmah are currently underway with the committee meeting monthly to further discuss such topics as Theme, Presenters, sponsors and exhibitors.

### 7. ONE Basin Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) Roadshow

The ONE Basin CRC is a focused collaboration bid to develop policy, technical and financial solutions that support Basin communities, business and governments to understand and reduce their exposure to climate, water and environmental threats. The Australian Government’s Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) program supports industry-led collaborations between industry, researchers and the community.



## **8. Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists**

The MDB Roundtable presents an opportunity for communities, businesses and scientists to come together to address the serious water problems. Options for addressing many of the immediate and long-term water security and river health challenges, with fundamental actions could be readily implemented with widespread benefits.

## **9. First Nation Peoples**

The MDA reached out to the newly formed National Indigenous Australian Agency based in Shepparton to establish and re-connect with the local Indigenous groups in the region.

NIAA, previously known as the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet, Indigenous Affairs group, welcomed the MDA executive and have subsequently provided contact details for the Yorta Yorta Nations, as well as names to assist with the logistical preparations for the 2020 76<sup>th</sup> National Conference.

NIAA, have indicated their support of the BCLP program and will disseminate details and correspondences throughout their networks.

## **10. Employee Entitlements**

The future cost to the MDA of employee entitlements is increasing steadily. A separate bank account has been initiated to hold all accrued entitlements. The account "Employee Entitlements" will be managed in accordance with standard practices.



**Emma Bradbury**

**Chief Executive Officer**

**MDA Regional Chair Report February 2020**

There has been much happening at the board level which Emma will report on. One I would like to highlight is the Leadership training opportunities.

Monika has kindly pulled together much of the correspondence from the board which is part of your attachments and discussed today.

Some particular issues I have responded to on behalf of region 6 at the board level in the last month or so include advocacy and media interviews around no lock 0 and the barrages and coordinating and supporting the correct information to the board re the historical fresh water nature of the lower lakes, advocacy around the great work SA has done to input water infra structure measures such as the low flows, the need for our barrages, the amount of water put back to the MDB by SA and more.

In December 2016 at our council I moved a motion to declare a climate emergency with recommended actions. This was accepted unanimously, and I look forward to council response and reference to the Coorong and lower lakes. I have since moved a motion at the MDA board level to declare a climate emergency and have had a response to put forward a climate position statement which we will respond to today. I trust we can take this as far as we can as it is to me the biggest problem with the MDB plan and needs much consideration.

Attachment 4

# MDBA

Deana Mildren

Regional Engagement Officer

14 February 2019



Australian Government



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# Acknowledgement of Country

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) pays respect to the Traditional Owners and their Nations of the Murray–Darling Basin.

We acknowledge their deep cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to their lands and waters.

The MDBA understands the need for recognition of Traditional Owner knowledge and cultural values in natural resource management, associated with the Basin.







# **Murray Darling Basin Authority and Basin Community Committee Update.**

# Murray Darling Basin Authority and Basin Community Committee (BCC)



- **Met 12 February**
- **Communique**
  
- **Basin Community Committee 13 & 14 February**
- **New Chair - Phil Duncan just completed a Southern Basin Familiarisation tour and visited the Lower Murray 9 & 10 February**

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# Rainfall

- Variable falls
  - Some parts of ACT up to 100mm
  - Broken Hill received less than 10mm
  - 0-23mm in the Hume catchment
- Minor flooding has been recorded in the Paroo, Macintyre, Condamine and Moonie rivers in southern Queensland.
- Likely that between 100 and 200mm are needed to make up the soil moisture deficit in parts of the Basin.

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# Rainfall in the Northern Basin

## QLD

- WRPS's are all accredited in Qld and the rules are working to protect flows – water users are not allowed to take until an announcement is made.
- Qld collaborating with the use of satellite imagery to assist with on ground compliance

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# Rainfall in the Northern Basin

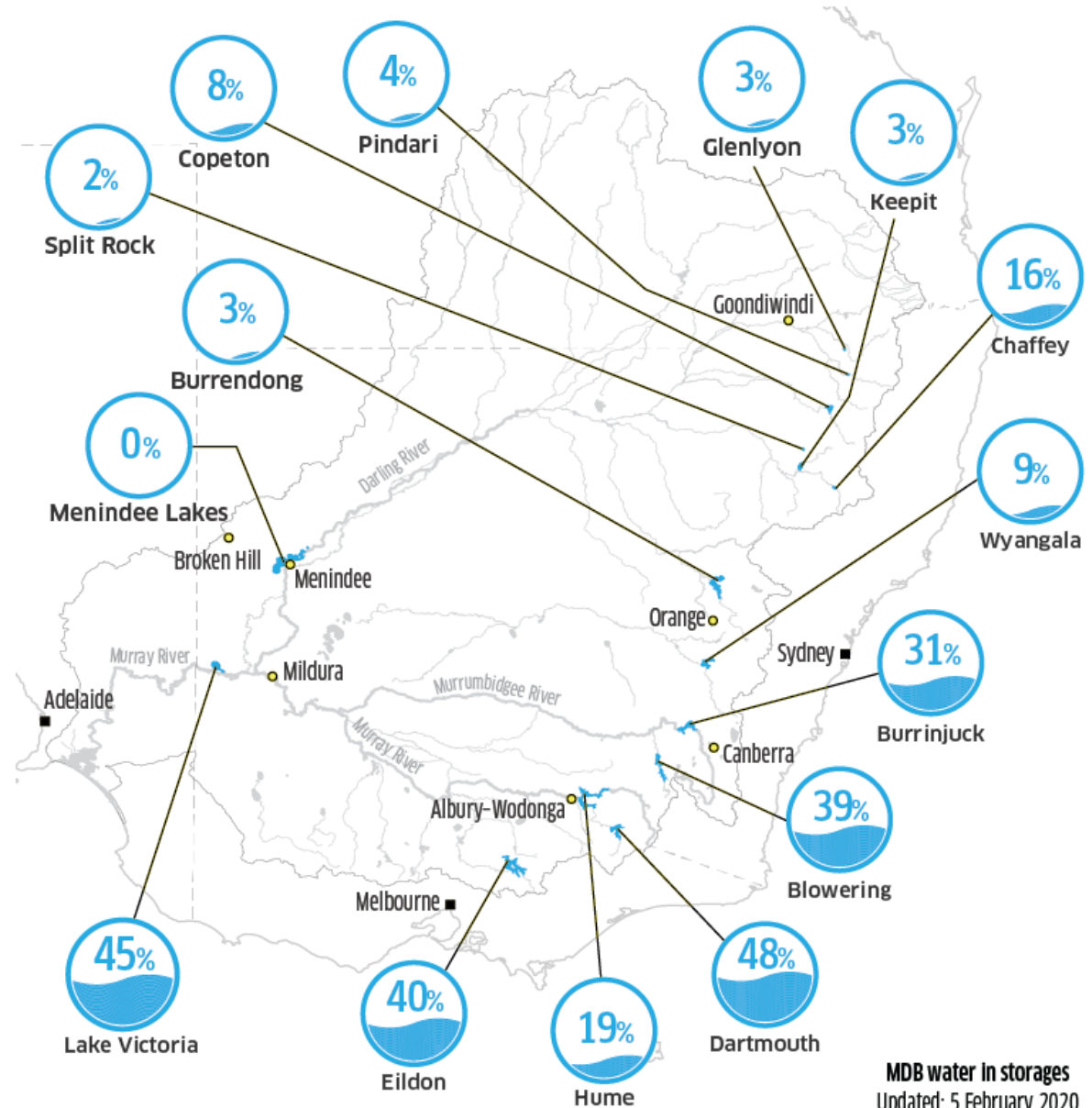
## NSW

- Section 324 notices issued by NSW Gov to prevent widespread water take
- Some areas had a temporary lifting of prohibition of take to reduce impact on infrastructure
- NSW Gov do not expect that the limited local take will materially impact on downstream flow targets



# Water in storage

- includes some recent inflows but not all



<https://www.mdba.gov.au/managing-water/drought-murray-darling-basin/murray-darling-basin-drought-update>

MDB water in storages  
Updated: 5 February 2020

# Water Quality

December 2019

## Key facts



Bushfires can impact water quality immediately and for many years. The impacts can vary greatly in different areas.



Turbidity (amount of suspended matter) and a change in water chemistry can have significant consequences for aquatic animal and plant life.



Rainfall after a fire can trigger **blackwater**-like events as ash and other materials wash into waterways, impact on fish, animals and town water supplies.



Check with your local water supplier or state government regarding your local water quality, following a bushfire.

<https://www.mdba.gov.au/managing-water/water-quality/bushfires-water-quality>

# Office of the Inspector General

24 February 2020

- 
- **Office of the Inspector General**
  - Website [www.igmdb.gov.au](http://www.igmdb.gov.au)
  - Northern Basin Commissioner
    - 1<sup>st</sup> year report
    - <https://www.igmdb.gov.au/media/5>
  - Langhorne Creek Community Meeting
    - Tuesday 3 March 2020
    - 10-11am
    - Langhorne Creek Sports Club
    - Email to register your interest: [igmdb@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:igmdb@agriculture.gov.au)



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# Water Sharing Investigation

- Inflows and supply into the Murray–Darling Basin.
- Delivery of water.
- Water sharing.
- Potential opportunities for enhancement.
  
- Report March 2020

# **ACSEES Lower Lakes Investigation**

15 November 2017

# ACSEES – investigation into Lower Lakes

## Review

- Science
- History
- Current management
- Policies.
- [www.mdba.gov.au/basin-plan-roll-out/monitoring-evaluation/lower-lakes-independent-science-review](http://www.mdba.gov.au/basin-plan-roll-out/monitoring-evaluation/lower-lakes-independent-science-review)
- **Panel Members**
  - Dr Francis Chiew (Chair)
  - Ms Jennifer Hale
  - Dr Michael Reid
  - Dr Klaus Joehnk
  - Dr Ian Webster



# ACCC Water Market Inquiry

24 February 2020

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# ACCC Water Market Inquiry

- Investigation of all options, transparency, efficiency, ways to enhance the market and regulation.
- Regional meetings have been completed
- Interim report in May 2020.
- Final report by 30 November 2020.



# **Native Fish Recovery & Management Strategy**

24 February 2020

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# Native Fish Recovery & Management

- 10 year plan to protect native fish
- Ensure critical native fish habitats are protected and managed
- Research and activities are resourced to develop Basin-scale knowledge
- Monitoring provides long-term insights

# Regional Offices

24 February 2020

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# Questions



## Office locations

Adelaide

Albury-Wodonga

Canberra

Toowoomba

 [mdba.gov.au](http://mdba.gov.au)  1800 630 114

 [engagement@mdba.gov.au](mailto:engagement@mdba.gov.au)

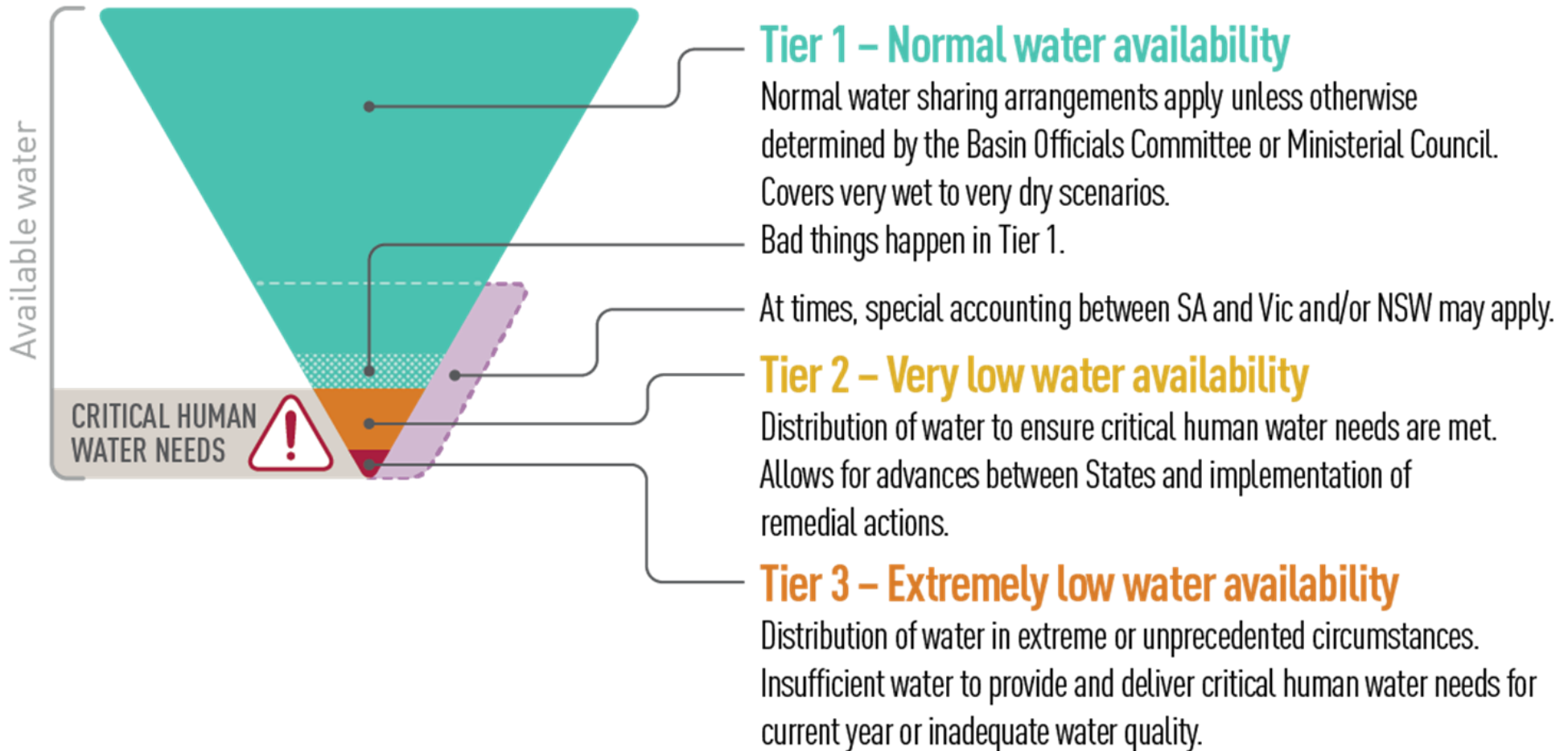


Australian Government





# Water sharing tiers



# **Independent panel assessing social and economic conditions across the Murray– Darling Basin.**

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# Social & Economic Panel

- Independent of the MDBA
- Chair, Robbie Sefton
- Background available on the website
- Community meetings finalised
- Interim report, December
- Proposed engagement on interim report, February
- Final Report April 2020

website [www.basin-socio-economic.com.au](http://www.basin-socio-economic.com.au)

# Water Resource Plans

15 November 2017

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# WRP progress

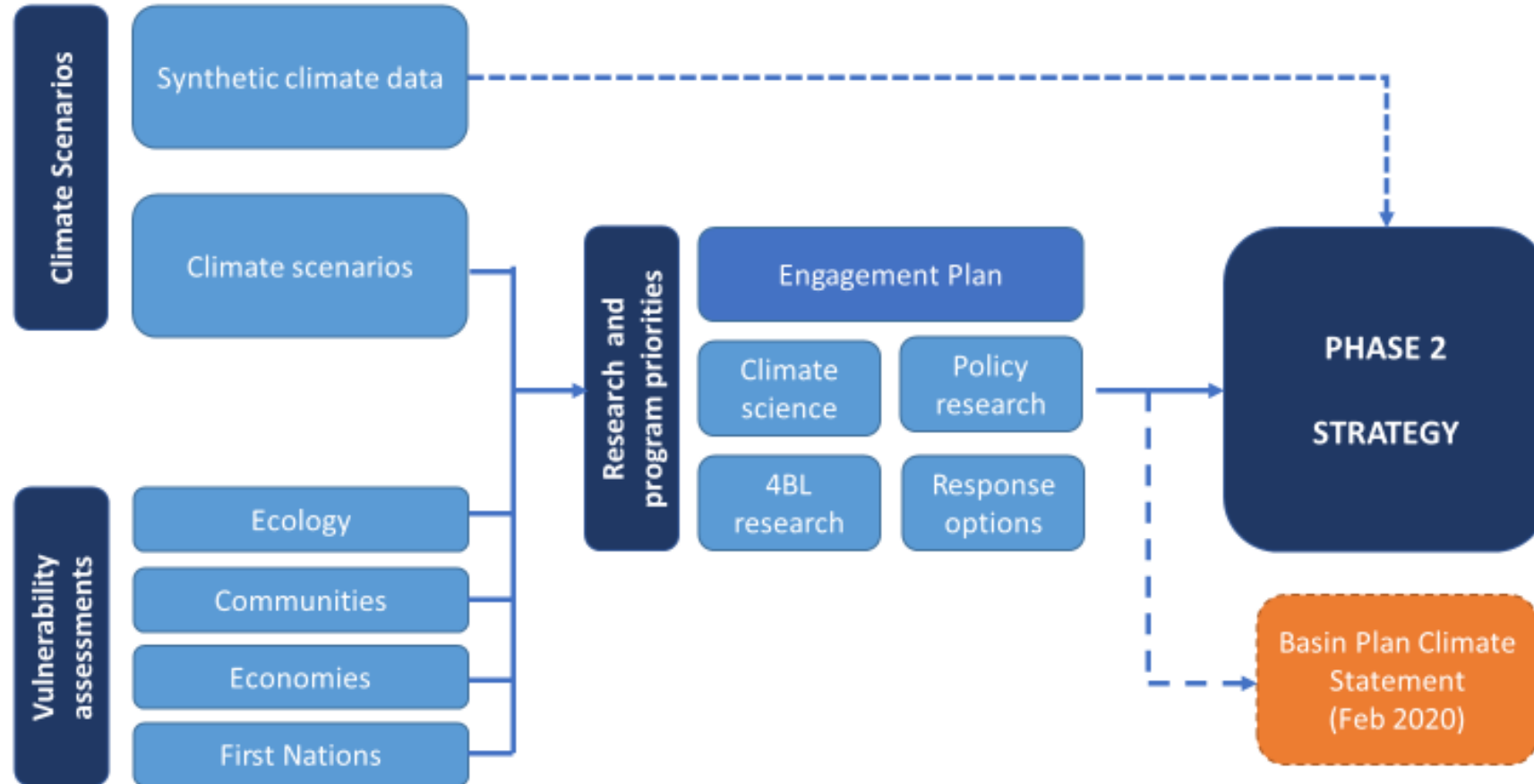
- Minister has accredited 8 plans including SA River Murray and Eastern Mt Lofty Ranges.
- Negotiations on other plans are ongoing

# Climate Change

15 November 2017



# Climate Change Research Program



## Murray-Darling Basin Climate Change Research Program



# Compliance

15 November 2017

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# Compliance

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# Compliance

# Basin Plan Implementation Progress

24 February 2020





## Water resource plans

**Status:** As anticipated, water resource plans were not completed by the original June 2019 deadline. Continued effort and commitment is needed to deliver these plans.



## Water recovery

**Status:** Bridging the gap – Water recovery is close to completion, although some targeted local recovery still needs to be completed.



## Compliance

**Status:** Governments continue to deliver against the Compliance Compact—additional resourcing and monitoring will strengthen compliance with water management rules across the Basin.



## Northern Basin initiatives

**Status:** Some initiatives are progressing, others need fast-tracking and continued liaison with communities. Reforms to protect low flows and water for the environment need to be fully implemented.



## Sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism

### *Supply and constraints projects*

**Status:** Basin state governments are progressing some projects, others are developing slowly and need fast-tracking to achieve completion by the 2024 deadline.

### *Efficiency measures*

**Status:** The required 62 GL/y of efficiency measures has not been recovered, and the SDL will adjust from 605 GL/y to 544 GL/y for 2019–20.



## Environmental water delivery

**Status:** In drought, this water is working to protect habitats, but like all entitlement holders there is limited water available for use. Challenges with the delivery of water for the environment in the past year are concerning.

