



Murray Irrigation

Basin Plan Review

Shareholder Information Sessions – February 2026

murrayirrigation.com.au

Background



- The MDBA is legally required to review the current Basin Plan during 2026.
- At the end of 2026 they will give their advice on the review to Water Minister Murray Watt.
- It's expected the MDBA will recommend to Minister Watt that the current Plan be changed.
- The Discussion Paper released on 5 February outlines **key issues of focus** for the review.
- Feedback on the Discussion Paper will inform the MDBA's recommendations on these issues.
- All feedback on the Discussion Paper is due with the MDBA by 5.00pm on Friday, 1 May.

Discussion Paper Content



- Each of the MDBA's **key issues of focus** for the review have their own specific Chapter in the Discussion Paper.
- This initial presentation covers the Chapters where our footprint receives specific attention.
- Sitting above this are some higher-order matters that will underpin the MDBA's entire forward delivery approach.
- It assumes the **full 450 GL** of buy-backs will be achieved and there is likely to be a **300 GL SDLAM shortfall**.
- There'll be a distinct shift in the 'style' of future implementation:
 - priority will be given to **practical solutions**;
 - these solutions will be **delivered at the local-level** wherever possible; and
 - effort will be made to more clearly define **what the Basin Plan can and can't do** (more cross-collaboration will be needed).
- There will be **less money available** for future implementation efforts, especially compared to the last 20 years.
- The potential **impacts of climate change** will inform all future delivery decisions – the Basin will be hotter and drier.

Chapter 3 – Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL) Assessments



- The SDLs determine the volume of consumptive use, beyond which unacceptable environmental impacts occur.
- The MDBA has found that 98 of the existing 109 SDLs still provide the required level of environmental protection.
- The MDBA believes 11 SDLs may not be achieving all the environmental outcomes required under the Basin Plan.
- One of these SDLs is the NSW Murray – which covers the entirety of Murray Irrigation’s footprint.

Chapter 3 – Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL) Assessments



- The key environmental outcome not being met is floodplain connectivity.
- This means the main channel of the Murray is not regularly breaking its banks and inundating connected floodplains and wetlands.
- To achieve this can take a lot of environmental water.
- There are also constraints along the NSW Murray that currently prevent this kind of watering activity from taking place.
- The lifting of **constraints along the NSW Murray** is covered in substantial detail in **Chapter 6 of the Discussion Paper**.

Chapter 3 – Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL) Assessments



- It's important to note that this type of outcome can be also achieved with a lot less water through the use of engineering solutions.
- Engineering solutions also significantly take the pressure off in terms of future water recovery for the environment.
- Murray Irrigation's RMW project is a good example of how this can be done – especially under future climate change scenarios.
- This type of approach also fits well with the MDBA's future implementation priorities.
- It's a practical solution already being implemented effectively at the local level.

Chapter 3 – Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL) Assessments



- The SDL for the South Australian Murray is also considered to be at risk, especially at the Murray Mouth.
- ‘Sufficiency of river flow volumes’ has been identified as one of the potential contributors.
- What this might mean in terms of further environmental water recovery in Murray Irrigation’s footprint is currently unclear.
- However, there’s general recognition in the Discussion Paper that flows alone won’t solve the identified issues at the Murray end-of-system.

Chapter 7 – Native Fish Decline



- Native fish decline across the Basin has been identified as a priority issue for the Review.
- Importantly, this is something the MDBA has recognised the Basin Plan won't be able to solve on its own (i.e. through more water recovery).
- Key identified causes of native fish decline include carp, poor water quality, and physical barriers to fish movement (e.g. dams, locks, weirs).
- Not one of these can be solved through environmental water recovery alone. Cross-collaboration beyond the Basin Plan will be needed.
- The Discussion Paper also suggests that better floodplain connectivity in our footprint would improve native fish outcomes.
- Again, on its own, this won't directly solve any of the key causes of native fish decline identified above.

Chapter 8 – Poor Water Quality



- The MDBA has chosen to focus on water quality, based on feedback from communities, industry, and local government.
- Key concerns include:
 - more frequent poor water quality incidents;
 - poor management of water quality risks; and
 - the need to deal with land-based pollution sources.
- These are all expected to worsen under climate change.
- This is another issue the MDBA has recognised won't be solved through the Basin Plan alone.
- Cross-collaboration beyond the Plan will be needed.

Chapter 8 – Poor Water Quality



- The Discussion Paper identifies the mid-Murray (including Edward-Wakool) as a ‘water quality hotspot’.
- This is due to reduced floodplain connectivity, hypoxic events during floods, and algal blooms and salinity issues during dry periods.
- We think this is another area where engineering solutions offer the most practical, cost-efficient, and effective way forward.
- Murray Irrigation already has a proven, highly successful, track-record of how this can be done.
- We’ve used our infrastructure to re-oxygenate water during floods and provide crucial habitat refuge from algal blooms and salinity.
- These benefits can be provided both within our footprint, as well as to downstream communities and ecological systems.

Chapter 9 – Water Infrastructure



- The Discussion Paper suggests that key southern Basin storage and delivery infrastructure has passed its engineered life and is vulnerable to failure.
- This applies to Dartmouth and Hume Dams, Lake Victoria, the Murray Mouth Barrages, and other key management infrastructure in NSW, Vic and SA.
- The MDBA is suggesting that current investment in capital expenditure is one-third to one-half of what it should be.
- The Basin Plan doesn't have the capacity to solve this issue. It will be up to Basin Governments to agree to this recommended level of investment.
- Where this investment is made under the *Murray-Darling Basin Agreement*, the NSW share could come from WaterNSW's MDBA charges.

Forward Process



- All feedback on the Discussion Paper is due with the MDBA by 5.00pm on Friday, 1 May.
- Murray Irrigation will seek to maximise its involvement in all available engagement opportunities.
- When the feedback period closes, the MDBA will review all submissions.
- A *What We Heard* report – summarising the feedback received – will be released in ‘late 2026’.
- The MDBA’s final advice and recommendations to Minister Watt will be released at the same time.

Key Priorities:

- How has our input to the submission process been used?
- What recommended Basin Plan changes are likely to impact us?
- What are Minister Watt’s intentions? Will there be further consultation in 2027?