

Murray Regional Strategy Group Basin Plan Review

Murray Regional Strategy Group (MRSRG) has compiled this guide to support community members make a submission to the Basin Plan Review. It aims to provide you with key takeaways from the MDBA's discussion paper and high level messages that will align with MRSRG's messaging.

MDBA Discussion Paper - What they say

Key take-aways discussion paper¹

- Focus for next 10 years is environment and First Nations; not how the Basin Plan can also better support communities hit hardest by water recovery.
- 27% of the total Basin consumptive (productive) pool already recovered for the environment, including pre-Basin Plan recovery such as The Living Murray.
- A shift from idealistic goals in the 2012 Basin Plan to practical solutions working in local/regional partnerships to deliver environmental water to priority areas.
- Assumes full Basin Plan 1.0 implementation, including the 450 GL and the anticipated shortfall up to 350 GL in SDLAM environmental water offset projects.
- Some original objectives are not feasible and need to be revised- i.e. flow over the barrages alone will not keep the Murray mouth open without dredging.
- Focus over the next 10 years on controlling carp and other invasive species, building fish passage, restoring habitats and improving water quality.
- Expenditure is one-third to half what's needed to sustain dams, regulators, town water treatment and other essential infrastructure over the long term.

Local and Regional impacts are minimised

- Socioeconomic assessments informing the Review minimise the impacts of water recovery on communities at a local and regional level.

- The assessments also do not cover the impact of buying 450 GL and up to another 355 GL for the SDLAM shortfall.
- No discussion of how the Basin Plan can better support communities over the next 10 years beyond recreational and tourism benefits of healthier rivers.

Best available science says 450 GL wasn't needed²

- The MDBA's assessment of the Basin Plan's Sustainable Diversion Limits found adding more water made little to no difference to the likelihood of achieving the Basin Plan's environmental outcomes in the southern Basin.
 - Instead, risks are river flow patterns, constraints preventing environmental water being delivered to floodplains and wetlands, and issues such as invasive species like carp
1. <https://www.mdba.gov.au/bpr-discussion-paper>
 2. <https://library-mdba.opendata.arcgis.com/apps/8ddd077f0c9647868cf5d2070829491a/explore>

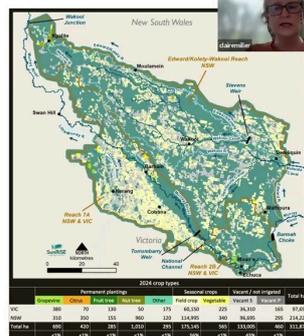
You can watch a recording of a full summary of the Basin Plan Review Discussion Paper by clicking on the YouTube Link below.

**The missing piece:
regional and local impacts**

Central Murray residents are likely to be less confident:

- To make decisions about their livelihood.
- They can keep their job if challenges occur.
- They live in a liveable and viable community.

They are more likely to report their livelihood could be affected a lot by Basin water management.



Map 5: Mid-Murray study area, NSW and VIC, with crop types in 2024

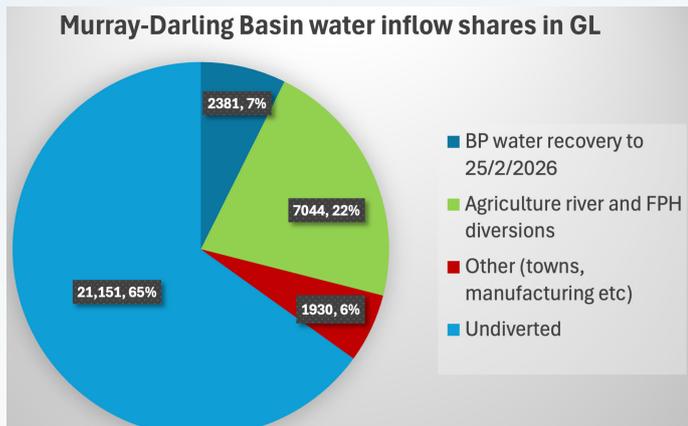


M: 0499 509 677 | E: cmiller2003@yahoo.com.au

Watch Presentation Here
[YouTube](#)

Murray Regional Strategy Group Basin Plan Review

Valleys	Entitlements on issue (ML)	Environmental entitlements (ML)	Environment % of consumptive pool
Murrumbidgee	1,569,409	538,582	34%
NSW Murray	1,819,139	550,600	30%
Victorian Murray	1,381,627	541,900	39%
Goulburn	1,290,337	567,700	44%
SA Murray	539,206	181,900	34%
Southern Basin total**	6,821,613	2,529,609	37%



What we know

- 74% of all inflows in the Basin remains within river systems for the benefit of the environment
- 22% of all inflows is available to agriculture

Communities on the frontline are losing confidence in their future

Before the Federal Government put the 450 GL buybacks on the table, the Plan was already failing to deliver one of its three legislated outcomes: productive and resilient water-dependent industries, and communities with confidence in their long-term future.

A 2023 social wellbeing survey³ undertaken to inform the 2026 Basin Plan Review found that Central Murray residents are likely to be less confident to make decisions about their livelihood or that they can keep their job if challenges occur.

It found Southern Basin irrigators, particularly those in irrigation districts such as MIL, are less confident in the future of their local community, and less likely to recommend their community to others as a good place to live.

Other studies show almost half the irrigable area in Central Murray is no longer being watered, driving down yields for key crops such as rice with knock-on impacts for towns and services, starting with jobs on the line at the Deniliquin rice mill.

As of 25 February 2026, the environment has about 37% of the total consumptive pool in the southern connected Basin. As the MDBA's own best available science shows, it does not need any more.

Some Solutions

- Stop the 450 GL buybacks now, and redirect the remaining money to controlling invasive species such as carp, building fish passage, and habitat restoration.
- Existing SDLs do not need to change.

- Undertake local and regional socioeconomic assessment of past, emerging and future impacts on-farm and beyond in communities affected by water recovery.
- Use this information to draft content for Basin Plan 2.0 that will ensure irrigation is productive and resilient, and that irrigation communities have confidence in their long-term future.
- No overbank environmental flows.
- Instead, partner with private landholders and irrigation companies on practical workarounds for prioritised, targeted watering on floodplains within existing constraints.
- Future expenditure must be affordable, supported by detailed economic modelling, with a full understanding of the cost impact for customers.

³ https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/bcmp-basin-community-values-final-report-uc_0.pdf

Make a submission - deadline is 1 May 2026

Submissions can be just a few words in an email, a letter or even a video. Talk about what the Basin Plan means for you, your family and community – and what you want the MDBA to recommend that Basin Governments do next?

- **Online template:** <https://getinvolved.mdba.gov.au/2026basinplanreview>
- **Email:** BPRsubmissions@mdba.gov.au
- **Post:** Basin Plan Review Submissions, Murray-Darling Basin Authority, GPO Box 1801, Canberra, ACT 2601