



# Murray–Darling Communities Investment Package

The Murray–Darling Basin Plan is a long-term \$13 billion investment in Australia’s most important food bowl, its people and its environment. The Australian Government is putting communities and jobs at the heart of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan.

To achieve a sustainable and certain future for the Basin, its people, industries and environment the Australian Government has set out a package comprising 11 actions and supported by \$269.7 million in funding. This is the total value of the investment package following the 2020 Budget.

## Our commitment

- Invest in community resilience and river health
- Build trust, transparency and accountability in government
- Improving implementation of the Basin Plan.

## Actions

- Stronger leadership
- Stronger compliance
- Better information
- Better monitoring and reporting of social, economic and environment conditions
- Investing in rivers and wetlands
- Investing in communities
- Supporting First Nations Australians
- Investing in off-farm water efficiency projects
- Designing and delivering water programs in partnership with communities
- Delivering environmental outcomes for the Riverland
- Strengthening working relationships between the Australian Government, states and local government to improve delivery of the Basin Plan.

## Investment package

### Invest in community resilience and river health

What we are doing	How we will do it	By when
Maximising the benefits of the Basin Plan for communities	<p>Deliver \$34 million for economic assistance to communities struggling with the effects of water recovery by extending the successful competitive grants Murray–Darling Basin Economic Development Program.</p> <p>Grants may be used to provide eligible communities impacted by water recovery programs with practical assistance to boost tourism and recreation and to diversify economically.</p> <p>This action responds to needs identified in the Sefton report and builds on the \$40 million investment to date from 2 rounds of the Murray–Darling Basin Economic Development Program.</p> <p>This action responds to recommendations of the Sefton report.</p>	<p>Quarter 1 2021 – round 3</p> <p>Quarter 1 2022 – round 4</p>
Improving river health for all users	<p>Deliver \$20 million to fund community-driven grants for on-ground projects that will improve the health of rivers and wetlands.</p> <p>This builds on existing commitments to the environment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$6 million for a fish passage in the Lower Darling</li> <li>• \$10 million to establish hatcheries at St George and Menindee</li> <li>• \$15 million to fence Northern Basin riverbanks</li> <li>• \$9.2 million to modify and decommission water infrastructure at Toorale.</li> </ul>	Quarter 1 2021
Delivering environmental outcomes in the Riverland	<p>Deliver \$37.6 million in practical projects to sustain Riverland environments. We will work with the South Australian Government to deliver projects. This action recognises that there have been delays in progress towards securing an additional 450 GL of water to improve river health and habitats on the lower Murray.</p> <p>Recover the 450 GL of water for the environment in ways that support Basin communities.</p> <p>This action responds to the findings of the WESA report and the recommendations of the Sefton report.</p>	Quarter 4 2020
Supporting First Nations Australians to play an active role in river health	<p>Deliver \$3.1 million for four new First Nations River Rangers teams, creating around 20 jobs.</p> <p>Agree the framework for implementing the \$40 million Aboriginal water entitlements program with Aboriginal communities.</p> <p>Appointment of an Indigenous board member to the Murray–Darling Basin Authority.</p> <p>This action partly responds to recommendations of the Sefton report.</p>	<p>Quarter 3 2021</p> <p>Quarter 1 2021</p> <p>Quarter 4 2020</p>

**Build trust, transparency and accountability in government**

<b>What we are doing</b>	<b>How we will do it</b>	<b>By when</b>
Providing stronger leadership	<p>Build a culture of genuine engagement and trust with communities and between governments.</p> <p>Maximising the benefits of the Basin Plan for all communities.</p> <p>Lead the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council in empowering communities to determine their own future and to keep governments accountable.</p> <p>Report 3 times a year on progress against the Package.</p> <p>Use the outcomes of the Sefton report to inform future work and decisions on implementing the Basin Plan.</p> <p>Appointed Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston AK, AFC (Ret'd) to provide strong and strategic leadership as Chair of the Murray–Darling Basin Authority.</p> <p>This action responds to recommendations of the Sefton report.</p>	<p>Quarter 4 2020</p> <p>Complete</p>
Ensuring stronger compliance	<p>Establish a statutory and independent Inspector-General of Water Compliance. This will bring together the water compliance role of the Murray–Darling Basin Authority with the assurance role of the Interim Inspector-General of Murray–Darling Basin Water Resources.</p> <p>Deliver \$38.7 million to improve Commonwealth water compliance functions. This builds on the Commonwealth's existing commitment of \$60 million for improvements in water metering and remote sensing.</p> <p>This action responds to recommendations of the Sefton report and the interim ACCC report.</p>	Quarter 3 2021
Providing better information	<p>Bring together water information from across governments in a more accessible format for water users and communities.</p> <p>The detailed platform will provide a one-stop shop for water storage, in-stream flows and trade information.</p> <p>This builds on the existing investment of \$4.9 million to the Bureau of Meteorology to improve real-time reporting on water flows.</p> <p>This action responds to recommendations of the Sefton report and the interim ACCC report.</p>	Quarter 3 2021
Better monitoring and reporting of social, economic and environment conditions	<p>Deliver \$7.5 million to monitor social, economic and environmental conditions in the Basin.</p> <p>This action builds on a \$20 million investment in Basin-specific research so river management can be based on the best available science.</p> <p>This action responds to recommendations of the Sefton report.</p>	Quarter 1 2021

## Improving implementation of the Basin Plan

What we are doing	How we will do it	By when
Designing and delivering water programs in partnership with communities	<p>More effectively seek community input and demonstrate how that feedback has been used in the design, delivery and evaluation of programs.</p> <p>This action responds to recommendations of the Sefton report.</p>	From Quarter 4 2020 – ongoing
Investing in off-farm water efficiency projects to increase water recovery	<p>Shift the focus away from on-farm water efficiencies and buybacks.</p> <p>Work with the states and irrigation networks to identify projects to generate water savings through off-farm infrastructure.</p> <p>This action responds to the findings of the WESA report and the recommendations of the Sefton report.</p>	Quarter 4 2020
Strengthening working relationships between the Australian Government, states and local government to improve delivery of the Basin Plan	<p>Work with Basin states to accelerate planning and delivery of supply and constraints projects that are at risk of not being delivered by 2024. We will partner with the National Water Grid Authority on these projects.</p> <p>This action builds on the government’s existing commitment of \$1.5 billion for these projects.</p> <p>Develop a new National Partnership agreement between the Australian and Basin state governments to provide funding for new and ongoing activities required to implement the Basin Plan.</p> <p>This action responds to the findings of the WESA report and the recommendations of the Sefton report.</p>	Quarter 4 2020