



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Senate Select Committee on the Multi-Jurisdictional Management and Execution of the Murray Darling Basin Plan

Final Report tabled in the Senate

Issued: 30 September 2021

The Senate Select Committee on the Multi-Jurisdictional Management and Execution of the Murray Darling Basin Plan today presented its report to the Senate.

Tasked with identifying ways in which the multijurisdictional management and implementation of the Basin Plan might be improved, the committee has, since July 2019, received 62 submissions from individuals and organisations, and conducted 13 public hearings and four site visits across the basin.

The committee's report examines the complexities of federalism, water management and issues relating to transparency, compliance, environmental watering, Indigenous basin communities, SDLAM, and strategic water management.

The report makes 18 recommendations, largely focused on improving transparency and basin community engagement. These include:

- clarifying and streamlining governance responsibilities, decision-making, and interactions between Commonwealth and the basin state agencies;
- commissioning an independent basin-wide audit to identify whether the systems and processes associated with water accounts currently provide a comprehensive view of the system;
- adopting a best-practice, principles-based approach to communicating with key stakeholders, particularly Indigenous basin communities;
- improving representation of, and engagement with all impacted stakeholders in WRP development approaches;
- broadening expertise and capacity at the MDBA to ensure basin states are complying with and prioritising their Indigenous commitments;
- improving communication practices when providing objectives for, and reasons behind environmental watering;
- reviewing evaluation mechanisms for environmental watering to ensure they are accessible and appropriate;
- reviewing current research initiatives to ensure a long-term, and coordinated approach is in place to overcome major water-related challenges.

The Murray Darling Basin Plan is vital in protecting the future of basin communities, agriculture, the Australian economy, and river-based ecosystems.

DATE REFERRED

23 July 2019

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Information about [completed hearings](#) is available on the committee's webpage.

REPORTING DATE

30 September 2021

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Senator Slade Brockman (Chair)
Senator Rex Patrick (Deputy Chair)
Senator Perin Davey
Senator Alex Gallacher
Senator Sarah Hanson-Young
Senator Deborah O'Neill

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As systems and technology improve, Governments must demonstrate transparency and ensure effective communication, to protect Australia's interests in times of water scarcity. This report therefore recommends several changes committed to addressing the complexities of this system, though it remains supportive of the MDBP as a necessary part of Australia's water management and sustainability goals.

For media enquiries contact: Office of Senator Slade Brockman, Committee Chair, on (08) 6245 3305.