

Appendix 3

Recent history of basin water reform¹

1988 - To support the Murray-Darling Ministerial Council, the Murray-Darling Basin Commission was established, under the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement, to manage the water of the River Murray and lower Darling River, advise on management of the Basin's environmental resources and oversee implementation of policies and programs aimed to help achieve sustainable use.

1988 - Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council adopts the Salinity and Drainage Strategy, including salt-interception scheme construction and an accountability system of salinity credits and debits.

1994 - COAG Water Reform Framework adopted to address over-allocation and included the separation of land and water property rights.

1995 - Basin governments agreed to 'cap' surface water diversions at 1993-94 levels of development.

2000 - Revised Basin Salinity Management Strategy agreed, incorporating end-of-valley targets.

2004 - In conjunction with the signing of the National Water Initiative, The Living Murray program commenced with a funding commitment to recover 500 gigalitres of water for the environment.

2007 - \$1.0 billion National Plan for Water Security announced to address over-allocation, improve water efficiency and introduce institutional and governance reforms, particularly in the Basin.

2007 - Passage of the Water Act 2007 (Cwth) allowed the Australian Government to take a more prominent role in coordinating management of Basin's water resources. Also established MDBA.

2008 - Memorandum of Understanding signed between Basin States and Commonwealth setting out principles for co-operative, efficient and effective management of Basin's water resources.

2008 - Basin States signed Intergovernmental Agreement on Murray-Darling Basin Reform, setting out arrangements to implement the MOU.

2008 - Water Act amended to incorporate provisions of MOU and IGA on Murray-Darling Basin Reform.

2010 - Guide to the proposed Basin plan released.

2011 - Release of the Draft Basin Plan

1 Department of the Environment, *Submission 50*, p.10.

2012 - Proposed Basin Plan released and advice sought from the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council under Section 43(A) of the Water Act. Advice received included the need for a Sustainable Diversion Limit adjustment mechanism and a Constraints Management Strategy.

2012 - The Basin Plan was made.

2013 - Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory sign onto the Intergovernmental Agreement on Implementing Water Reform in the Murray-Darling Basin.

2013 - Constraints Management Strategy released.

2014 - New South Wales and Queensland sign onto the Intergovernmental Agreement on Implementing Water Reform in the Murray-Darling Basin.

2014 - Commonwealth releases the Water Recovery Strategy with a priority to invest in water saving infrastructure projects over purchasing as a means of returning water to the environment.

2014 - Basin Plan water trading rules commenced.

2014 - Findings of the independent review of the Water Act 2007 released.

2014 - Commonwealth environmental water Trading Framework released, outlining the CEWH's legislative requirements and operating rules.

2015 - First Basin Plan Annual Report

2015 - Release of independent Stocktake Report on progress in the SOL Adjustment Mechanism

2015 - Legislation to limit purchasing to 1500 GL passes the Parliament on 14 September.