



Basin Community Committee

Bringing a community perspective to the Murray–Darling Basin

COMMUNIQUE

28 March 2023

The Basin Community Committee met on the 28 February and 1 March 2023, with most members attending in person on Ngarrindjeri Country in Murray Bridge.

BCC members shared updates from their communities. Many communities across the Basin are now focussed on flood recovery and the clean-up. Following the flooding, communities are concerned about the impacts of invasive pests and weeds including the explosion of populations of European Carp in waterways and the increase in fire risk due to high fuel loads. Despite the devastation, the benefits of floods were also recognised, with good soil moisture, full water storages, and water flowing to the floodplains and wetlands. Members acknowledged communities are fatigued and that it is their resilience that carries them through the hard times. Access to, and the increased cost of, labour and the cost of living continues to be a key challenge for communities across the Basin.

The Committee met with leaders from the Lower Murray irrigation communities of Mypolonga and Long Flat, hearing firsthand the struggle that the recent flood events have caused, with many landowners experiencing significant loss of property, income and farming livelihoods.

The Committee also met with Tim Hartman, CEO of the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation and heard about the work they are doing to improve and promote land and water management in the region in partnership with other agencies.

While in the region, the Committee visited the Lower Lakes, Coorong and the Murray mouth with staff from the MDBA and SA Water briefing the committee on the values and management of the system. Dr Jody O'Connor and Dr Nadine Kelly, SA Department of Environment and Water also provided the Committee with a detailed briefing on actions taken to improve the health of the region through the [Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin Program](#).

The Committee received updates on the implementation of the Basin Plan from:

- Mr Andrew McConville – Chief executive of the MDBA
- Ms Lyn O'Connell- Chair of the Basin Officials Committee
- The Hon. Troy Grant – Inspector General Water Compliance
- Dr Simon Banks – Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder

The Committee also received an update from the MDBA on the Native Fish Recovery Strategy and the upcoming [Native Fish Forum](#) planned to be held in Dubbo NSW in May 2023.

The Basin Community Committee is an independent advisory committee to the Murray–Darling Basin Authority and the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council. Established under the Water Act 2007, the Committee ensures the voices of diverse communities in the Basin are heard.

For more information on the Basin Community Committee

 www.mdba.gov.au/BCC  1800 630 114



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The Committee is concerned about the 2024 Basin Plan deadlines and supports local and community-based solutions to achieve the water recovery targets. They are seeking a clear process to enable constructive ideas and options to be discussed and explored. The Committee emphasised the importance of transparency and encouraged the Basin Officials Committee to constructively engage when formulating their advice to Ministerial Council. The Committee urged the consideration of social and economic impacts when implementing the Basin Plan, including through the recently announced Strategic Water Purchase Framework.

The Committee reiterated the importance of engaging with communities as Governments consider ongoing implementation of the Plan, including remaining water recovery and agreed to publish the advice that they provided to the Murray Darling Basin Ministerial Council in February 2023. The Committee looks forward to providing Ministers and the Authority with ongoing advice on water management in the Basin.

Committee Chair Phil Duncan confirmed to the Committee, his intention is to step down from the role in mid-2023.

BACKGROUND

Members of the Committee were appointed by the Authority after an extensive selection process involving all Basin governments. They reflect the diverse perspectives of towns and communities across the Basin, as well as the diversity of experiences around water reform.

Contact your local Basin Community Committee member via engagement@mdba.gov.au to share your views on how the Basin Plan is being implemented.

See a full list of members and map of their locations at www.mdba.gov.au/BCC

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