Australian Government

MURRAY–DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY

The 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation
An overview

Image: River Murray in Hattah National Park

Foreword

More than 20 years ago, a critical journey began to rebalance the scales and bring water use back to more sustainable levels in the Murray–Darling Basin. Our river environment – and therefore it's communities and industries – were in trouble. All governments decided to act in the national interest. Together, we embarked on a bipartisan water reform journey not seen anywhere else in the world. The significance of that statement cannot be underestimated.

While this massive reform – including the more recent Basin Plan – has been rolled out, many other factors have come into play, and compounded the impacts of change. Climate change, drought, technological change, the ageing workforce, a global pandemic and changing consumer trades are all taking their toll and some Basin communities feel like they're no longer in control of their future. Having spent time working on a farm, I have lived through drought and the resulting uncertainty and am familiar with this unique feeling of vulnerability. While travelling and listening to Basin communities I have heard and seen these stories. This feeling of vulnerability concerns us all.

You could be forgiven for wondering – is all this water reform worth it? Are we seeing the benefits? This Evaluation presents a good opportunity for us all to reflect, review and adapt.

We have come a long way. Working collaboratively, we've set up the world's first sustainable water management system. We've got catchment-scale plans which guide how water is shared and used in each catchment. Compliance frameworks are in place to monitor water take activities to make sure it's legal and fair. Also, a significant portion of water has been recovered for the environment and is being used for environmental benefit, which ultimately benefits us all.

The reform is working and needs to continue, but we need to take every opportunity to reflect, learn and adapt. We also need to keep our ears and eyes open to how Basin communities and industries are faring. If they felt they've been dealt out of their future, we need to deal them back in.

This Evaluation is designed to give space to reflect, adjust and change as new information and science becomes available and we learn more about sustainably managing the natural asset Basin communities rely on. Priority areas have been identified through the evaluation process and it will take all Basin governments, communities and change makers working together to maintain our momentum.

This Evaluation has made 12 recommendations to facilitate this progress and the MDBA has committed to 6 prioirity areas designed to increase collaboration and continue our road of reform.

We know drought, climate change and other factors are taking their toll. The scale and pace of change presents challenges for adjustment, but it's in Australia's interest to rebalance the scales and create a sustainable long-term footing for industries and communities and the environment we live in. We must continue to work together to preserve one of Australia's greatest natural assets.

MDBA Chair, Sir Angus Houston
AK, AFC (Ret'd)

The Basin Plan – 8 years in

The Murray–Darling Basin is crucial to Australia's economy, home for many Australians, and contains a rich diversity of natural environments that are unique in Australia and the world. The Basin is home to more than 2.2 million Australians including more than 40 First Nations, it generates $8 billion in tourism and $24 billion in food and fibre annually and supports 120 waterbird species and more than 50 native fish species throughout its rivers and wetlands.

The Basin Plan, established in 2012 under the *Water Act 2007*, was developed to rebalance the system and respond to the severe pressures the Millennium drought placed on the Basin's rivers. The Basin Plan is the largest water reform of its kind in the world. It aims to achieve a sustainable healthy system for the benefit of all users – the environment, communities, cultural and recreational users, as well as irrigated and dryland agriculture.

The Basin Plan is the commitment all Basin governments made to work collectively towards a sustainable and healthy river system. It seeks to establish enduring arrangements that leave enough water in the rivers to sustain natural ecosystems, which in turn underpin communities and industries.

The Evaluation is the most extensive review built into the Basin Plan and a crucial checkpoint in the process of water reform. It provides an opportunity to assess how the Basin Plan implementation is tracking, if desired outcomes are being achieved and areas for improvement.

The Evaluation has drawn upon expertise and analysis from a wide range of sources – including from the science community, independent advisors, the Australian Government and state and territory governments, and stakeholders from communities and industries. Several checkpoints with independent experts have been built into the approach to validate results and ensure that the Evaluation is a comprehensive assessment of implementation progress and outcomes at the Basin scale.

The Basin Plan in action

> ***The Evaluation shows the Basin Plan is achieving important results. Progress and measurable outcomes have been observed at the Basin scale. These results should be acknowledged and celebrated, as the reform has been complex and challenging.***

- **Most elements of the Basin Plan are now in place and are improving sustainable and adaptive water management.** This includes limits on water use, improved compliance measures and significant improvements in water metering, monitoring and accounting.
- **Water for the environment** is now a secure and enduring element of the system. This water helps make sure our rivers are flowing and is being used strategically on important environmental sites across the Basin and throughout the river system. Flows provided by the release of water for the environment are restoring the health of rivers and wetlands, and without these flows issues such as fish deaths and algae would have been much worse.
- During a period of rapid change for many Basin communities, **the Basin Plan has contributed to some positive social, economic and cultural change, this varies across the Basin.** There has been significant variation in this contribution, and important differences in the distribution of impacts on communities, ranging from significant negative impacts on some small regional communities to generally positive impacts on most other Basin communities.

The Basin Plan implementation

Elements of the Basin Plan to achieve a healthy, working Basin

Sustainable diversion limits set how much water can be taken from the Basin's river systems and groundwater aquifers for use.

Water resource plans outline how water will be managed in catchments throughout the Basin.

Water for the environment contributes to improving the health of the Basin's rivers, lakes and wetlands.

Water trade is the ability to buy or sell water entitlements and allocations. It enhances the productivity of industries and helps provide water for the environment.

Compliance is essential to ensure water resources are metered, measured and transparent, and ensures all water users meet their obligations.

Ongoing **monitoring, accounting and reporting** occurs across all water management components. This information is publically accessible.

Significant progress has been made since the Basin Plan came into effect in 2012. Further work is needed ahead of the 2026 Basin Plan Review.

Basin Plan Implementation Progress

Progress	Next steps
✓ Sustainable diversion limits (SDLs) were set in 2012 and are now in place. ✓ The transition from the Cap to new limits occurred in mid-2019. ✓ Improved knowledge has allowed for new limits to be set for the northern Basin and several groundwater areas. ✓ Water recovery has become more targeted, with focused effort on other measures to support limits. ✓ The recovery target has been adjusted to 2,075 gigalitres as a result of 2 amendments to the Basin Plan, including for the SDL Adjustment Mechanism.	• The delivery of SDL Adjustment Mechanism projects is needed to modernise the river and change the limits of water use. • There is a growing risk that the 2024 timeframe for some constraints and supply projects may not be achieved.
✓ As of July 2020, 13 water resource plans are in place for Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. ✓ As of mid-2020, all 20 New South Wales water resource plans are with the MDBA for assessment. ✓ These plans take significant time to develop, assess and accredit. ✓ Most water resource plans experienced delays in assessment and accreditation.	• The remaining water resource plans from New South Wales are crucial to future management in the northern Basin. • There are a range of projects in the northern Basin that also need to progress to development and delivery on the ground including the licensing and measurement of floodplain harvesting and overland flows, and the roll-out of remaining 'Northern Basin Toolkit' measures.
✓ Over 2,100 GL of water is now held and managed by the Basin's environmental water holders and is being applied across the Basin to achieve healthy river system outcomes. ✓ Measures, such as the Northern Basin Toolkit have been put in place to enable targeted actions that benefit the environment. ✓ The Basin Plan's Environmental Management Framework is in place to guide implementation of improvement to flow regimes, coordination of water for the environment and to enable adaptive management.	• The National Water Initiative identifies the need for community partnerships. There needs to be more consistent and coordinated effort by the Basin governments and the MDBA in helping water users to work within the new framework.
✓ The southern Basin water market is well-established and demonstrates the ability of water markets to support the movement of water resources to their highest value use.	• Greater and more practical information is needed to support water users' participation in the market.
✓ Improved compliance arrangements were fast-tracked as a result of community concerns and public scrutiny. ✓ Basin governments worked effectively together to agree and implement a Compliance Compact. ✓ There have been significant improvements in water metering, monitoring and accounting.	• Trust and community confidence needs to be improved.
✓ Monitoring of Basin Plan outcomes has begun through Basin states and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. ✓ Accounting methods and processes are in place and are maturing. ✓ There are a range of implementation reports publicly available that provide transparency on Basin Plan progress.	• Monitoring programs are being implemented but these vary at temporal and spatial scale. There are significant gaps that need to be addressed to improve analysis of Basin condition. • Basin governments have committed to improving transparency on Basin Plan progress and outcomes.

The 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation

Major findings

Image: Barwon River, Brewarrina NSW

Environment and hydrology

The Basin Plan is having a significant and positive impact on the Murray–Darling Basin's environment. This has been crucial for sustaining water-dependent ecosystems during the recent drought but is unlikely to be sufficient to achieve long-term outcomes unless further implementation and other actions are fast-tracked.

Major findings

- The Basin Plan has **protected flow regimes** across much of the southern Basin, including base and fresh flows in some rivers. **Positive ecological responses have resulted from water for the environment.**
- In the regulated rivers of the northern Basin, the Basin Plan has **protected some rivers from the worst impacts of the unprecedented drought**. Implementation of the Basin Plan has been associated with improvements to the flow regimes, including reductions in the effects from the severity and duration of dry spells and protection of the first flows after needed rain fell. This has, however, **only been possible in regulated rivers where water can be delivered from storages.**
- The Basin Plan has enabled delivery of water for the environment to support the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth ecosystems through the drought, **substantially avoiding the environmental degradation that occurred during the Millennium drought.**
- The Basin Plan is **unable to effectively support many floodplain and wetland ecosystems until implementation of critical improved water infrastructure and river operating rules are in place.** These are committed to be delivered through the package of projects to adjust limits, including supply and constraints projects. **Also needed is the accreditation of all water resource plans as these set the rules on how much water can be taken from the system on an annual basis,** ensuring the SDLs are not exceeded over time. The plans also set the rules for management of water for the environment.
- The major fish death events in 2019 **demonstrate the need for whole-of-system management** and are a stark reminder of the potential impacts that full implementation of the Basin Plan seeks to mitigate.
- Basin governments and the Basin Plan need to **continue to adapt and improve approaches to managing water quality and salinity**, particularly in the context of low or no-flow conditions.

Social, cultural and economic

During a period of rapid change for many Basin communities, the Basin Plan has contributed to some positive social, economic and cultural change in the Basin. There has been significant variation in this contribution, and important differences in the distribution of impacts on communities, ranging from significant negative impacts on some small regional communities to generally positive impacts on most other Basin communities.

Major findings

- There are multiple inextricably linked drivers shaping conditions in communities. The largest drivers include **forces of climate, globalisation, changes in the structure of the Australian economy, changes in population and demographics, and farm consolidation as well as innovation and technological changes in agriculture.**
- The need to change water use and management in the Basin from an overused system triggered the Basin Plan's establishment. Reducing the amount of water available for use has, as expected, had impacts particularly on lower value irrigated agriculture and communities with high water dependencies. Water recovery and the various approaches used to recover water have had **mixed impacts on people, businesses and communities in the Basin.** Lessons from the various approaches to water recovery and their flow-on impacts to communities should be **considered by governments in future efforts to move consumption to sustainable levels** in the Murray–Darling river systems.
- Water trade rules implemented through Basin Plan reforms are **supporting ongoing improvement to water markets** (primarily surface water) across the Murray–Darling Basin. Key Basin Plan implementation activities have supported improving the efficiency and effectiveness of markets. The improvements **sought to improve drought resilience, facilitated moving water to its highest value use,** and assisted with the transition to the new SDLs.
- Market transparency and performance have improved across the Murray–Darling Basin through actions implemented by state governments, some driven by the Basin Plan trading rules. However, there remains a **lack of transparency and timeliness of market information.** When this is addressed it is expected the **performance of the water market will be significantly improved for the benefit of all market participants**.
- **The timing, location and volume of demand is changing, and this is affecting communities and water delivery** across both the southern and northern Basin. In the southern Basin this has had flow on impacts on communities, river operations and the environment.
- There is evidence to suggest that **much of the past funding to support communities to adapt to water reform could have been better targeted**, particularly for those smaller communities that have had more water recovered through direct buybacks or that did not receive on-farm irrigation upgrades.
- The **complexity of the water policy and management system and the number of different government agencies involved is confusing and has worn down community confidence** in some regions. This is also a major barrier for effective and coordinated engagement with water users and Basin stakeholders.
- The involvement of First Nations peoples in water resource planning and delivery in the Basin began prior to the *Water Act (2007)* and the Basin Plan. The Basin Plan has formalised some of these partnerships and **provided further opportunities for inclusive decision-making.**
- The Basin Plan builds on work undertaken by the state and territory governments and has **provided additional opportunities for First Nations peoples to play an active role in water planning.**
- Looking ahead, there are opportunities to strengthen First Nations peoples' water access for social, cultural and economic outcomes. There is also **considerable opportunity to further draw on and learn from First Nation peoples' knowledge of the rivers and natural resource management.**

A changing climate

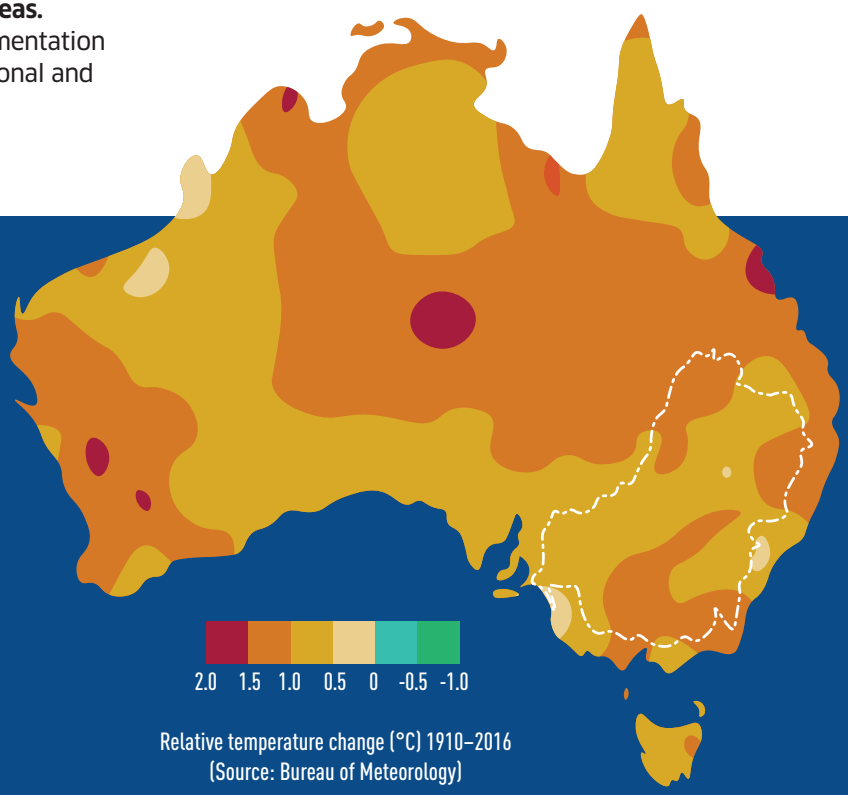
The Basin Plan is having a significant and positive impact on the environment and communities, but it is not enough on its own and governments will need to implement a range of additional, practical measures to achieve a healthy and resilient Basin.

Major findings

- **This Evaluation comes at the end of the driest 3 years on record for the Basin,** part of the extended and unprecedented drought, which has had a large impact on water availability.
- The change in climate will **significantly impact water availability, use and management resulting in flow-on impacts to communities, industries and the environment.** These changes pose the **greatest risk to achieving the Basin Plan's desired social, economic and environmental outcomes.**
- There are still **elements of the Basin Plan that are yet to be delivered and progress is lagging in some crucial areas.** Governments must continue to focus energy on implementation of projects to modernise the river system at local, regional and Basin-scale levels.
- The Basin Plan was developed to consider climate change. The Evaluation provides evidence that **implementation efforts have helped buffer the system from stress.**
- **Climate change will require difficult decisions to be made at national, Basin and local scales.** An almost certain outcome is that there will be insufficient water resources – or unpredictable rainfall/runoff patterns – to continue business as usual.

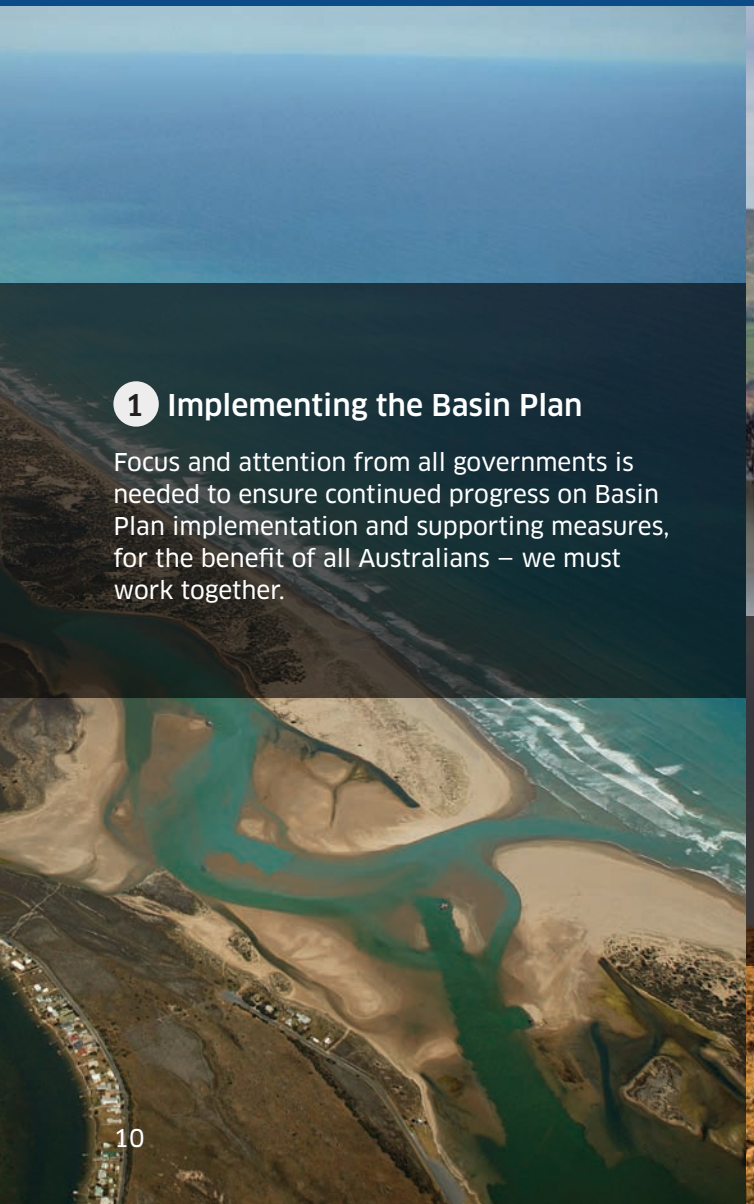
While the climate has natural variability and is prone to extremes, evidence provided by CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology identify the climate of the Basin is changing and the future is likely to be warmer, mostly drier and include more frequent severe droughts and weather events.

The first 8 years of Basin Plan's implementation have tested the Basin Plan and water management in extreme climate conditions. Adapting to the changing climate will increasingly be a focus for the diverse stakeholders in the Basin. Governments and industry groups have already begun this process.



Relative temperature change (°C) 1910–2016
(Source: Bureau of Meteorology)

The 6 priority areas for the future



1 Implementing the Basin Plan

Focus and attention from all governments is needed to ensure continued progress on Basin Plan implementation and supporting measures, for the benefit of all Australians – we must work together.

2 Adapting to climate challenges and increasing resilience

Governments, industries and communities must work to improve their climate resilience and adapt their use and management.

3 Strengthening focus and support to enable social and economic outcomes

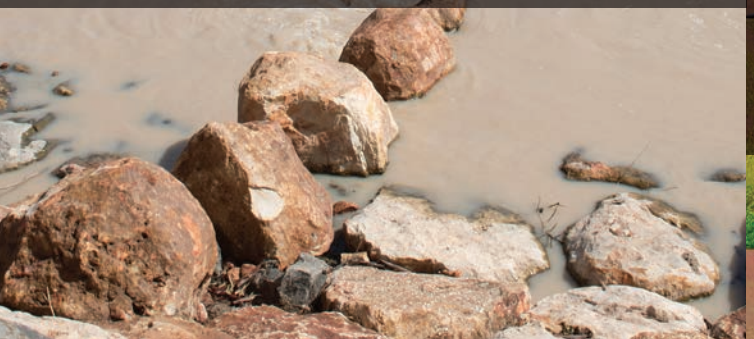
A key lesson from the initiation and implementation of the Basin Plan is the need for these difficult choices to be made *with* Basin communities and stakeholders not *for* them.

Focus for the future

Basin governments, communities and change makers must work together to improve the health and productivity of the Murray–Darling Basin. The Evaluation has pinpointed several priority areas for these efforts.

4 Establishing a clear and committed pathway for First Nations social and economic outcomes

There is a need to provide First Nations peoples with a clearer pathway to achieve enhanced cultural outcomes in the Basin, as well as to clarify their involvement in water resource management.



5 Integrating water management with other activities to achieve environmental restoration

Basin governments need to work with communities to develop clear priorities and a framework for integrating water within broader natural resource management.

6 Advancing science and monitoring

Strategic investment in science, a structured framework for monitoring and smart collaboration between Basin governments is essential to ensure ongoing continuous improvement at a Basin scale.

Image: The Murray Mouth, South Australia

Priority area:

1 Implementing the Basin Plan

The Evaluation shows the Basin Plan is achieving positive outcomes – measurable environmental outcomes have been observed at the Basin-scale, along with some good local projects involving communities and industries. Many of the major elements of the Basin Plan are now in place and are improving sustainable water management. Some critical elements, however, still lag in implementation. **Until all components of the Basin Plan are operational, the full benefits for Basin communities and the nation cannot be delivered.**

- **Recommendation 1** – Basin state governments and the Australian Government need to urgently commit to delivering significant Basin Plan projects. These include the **SDL Adjustment Mechanism projects, 'Northern Basin Toolkit' measures and the remaining water resource plans, which are yet to be accredited.** All are complex initiatives and governments need to continue to work in partnership with local communities to design and implement.

- **Recommendation 2** – There is still scope for Basin governments to propose **new and innovative approaches to achieving the long-term sustainable limits for water use in the Basin.** As Basin governments and communities engage on completing the remaining elements of Basin Plan implementation it will be **vital to show how these new approaches could contribute to delivery of sustainable water use limits.**

MDBA commitment:

The groundwork must start soon to devise an approach for the 2026 Basin Plan Review, including meaningful community and other stakeholder involvement in the process.

The MDBA will work with Basin governments and stakeholders to take this forward, focusing on the long-term sustainable health of the Basin.

Image: Water storage from Ludlows boat ramp, VIC

Priority area:

2 Adapting to climate challenges and increasing resilience

The climate of the Basin is changing and water managers, communities, industries and the environment will need to adapt to a hotter and drier climate future. A key cross-cutting theme from this Evaluation is the need for all water managers and water users to plan and adapt to the changing climate for the long-term future of the Basin.

- Recommendation 3 – Basin governments should improve **sharing of knowledge, tools and innovations that are critical to support climate adaptation and water management.** Information and science on future water availability and trends must be shared widely to support businesses, communities and industries plan to be proactive, adapt and diversify.
- Recommendation 4 – **Basin governments and the MDBA need to prepare to adapt the Basin Plan in 2026 to incorporate future climate scenarios and trends.** This means improving existing tools and developing new frameworks for Basin-scale management. An agreed work program should be established and shared publicly.
- Recommendation 5 – **Basin water users, managers, First Nations and community groups need to plan for the future climate.** As well as Basin-wide assessment, local climate opportunities and risks should be given attention along with implications, trade-offs and adaptation priorities.

MDBA commitment:

The MDBA will facilitate the sharing and coordination of information on Basin climate adaptation. The MDBA will bring water managers together with communities, industries, First Nations and governments to explore strategies.

The MDBA will focus effort and investment to improve access to science and evidence for all stakeholders to contribute to enhancing climate resilience and adaptation in the Basin.

Image: All Saints vineyard in Rutherglen, Victoria

Priority area:

3 Strengthening focus and support to enable social and economic outcomes

This Evaluation and recent reviews highlight an **urgent need for targeted and focused support for communities in the Basin, particularly smaller, irrigation-dependent and remote communities.** This requires meaningful engagement to customise support and provide improved information. Basin communities are experiencing rapid change driven by many factors, of which water availability is only one. Recent commitments by Basin government water ministers to work collectively to share information, the Australian Government's $35 million Hydrometric Network and Remote Sensing Program in the north and the Australian Government's Murray–Darling Communities Investment Package will improve information access and respond to some of the community concerns about information and engagement.

- **Recommendation 6** – Basin governments and the MDBA need to work in partnership with industry, First Nations and other water users to **ensure water information is more accessible, understandable and timely,** in order to create a more transparent, effective, practical operating environment for water users.
- **Recommendation 7** – Basin governments and the MDBA must commit to working with Basin communities on water management to **boost meaningful and coordinated two-way engagement.**
- **Recommendation 8** – Basin governments need to **strengthen policies and programs that support communities and industries to adapt and prosper** – including, but going beyond water focused programs. Investment in collecting social and economic data at Basin and regional scales is required to shape well designed and targeted support for communities and industries. There are **opportunities to stimulate regional development and prosperity through facilitating adjustment**, and underpinning agricultural development including research and development, First Nations policies, infrastructure investment and land use planning.

MDBA commitment:

In collaboration with the Australian Government, experts and researchers, the MDBA will help improve social, economic and cultural data collection and analysis. Through its regional network, the MDBA will disseminate this information to support community planning processes.

Image: Brewarrina fish ladders. Barwon–Darling River, NSW

Priority area:

4 Establishing a clear and committed pathway for First Nations social and economic outcomes

There are more than 40 First Nations in the Basin and **the MDBA and Basin governments value and respect their significant knowledge of the Basin and its ecosystems.** Better involvement and support is needed for First Nations people to benefit from their cultural and economic connections with Basin rivers and floodplains. There is also **an opportunity to learn and incorporate First Nation knowledge into Basin water use and management.**

- **Recommendation 9** – First Nations, Basin governments and the MDBA should develop a **practical pathway for the use of water for cultural and economic outcomes.** This should build on current knowledge and fast-track initiatives, such as the $40 million water entitlements project for First Nations. Action should be focused on short-term practical activities, as well as build the foundations for enhanced First Nations outcomes in the longer term.

MDBA commitment:

The MDBA commits to working with First Nations to identify practical options that enhance First Nation outcomes as work proceeds on the review of the Basin Plan in 2026.

The appointment of a First Nations Authority member will help the MDBA collaborate with First Nations to enhance our knowledge of the Murray–Darling and apply this to water management.

Image: Waterbirds at Narran Lakes, NSW

Priority action:

5 Integrating water management with other activities to achieve environmental restoration

Sustainable water management needs dedicated water for the environment as achieved through the Basin Plan, to work alongside natural resource management. Increased targeted investment and support for actions that complement water management include catchment soils and vegetation health and control of pests and weeds. These activities do not replace the need for environmental flows, but support and complement the outcomes, including improved resilience and adaptation to climate change.

- **Recommendation 10** – Basin governments need to work with communities to **develop clear priorities and a framework for broader natural resource measures.** Increased investment and support for additional measures can be driven by governments, industries and communities, and it is important that increased effort is targeted and integrated with environmental watering.

MDBA commitment:

The Basin Watering Strategy that guides use of water for the environment will be updated in 2022 and will now also consider inclusion of broader natural resource management, social and cultural outcomes. The MDBA will update this strategy involving Basin communities, experts and Basin governments.

Image: Checking water for dissolved oxygen and salinity, NSW

Priority action:

6 Advancing science and monitoring

Greater investment in science and monitoring is badly needed to support the management of a complex river system like the Basin. The Evaluation has identified gaps in monitoring while emerging risks, including climate change, will require **improved knowledge to support adaptation**. Basin governments need to collaborate and invest more in long-term science and monitoring programs as well as short-to-medium-term intervention monitoring to support understanding and appropriate responses to Basin conditions and changes in them over time.

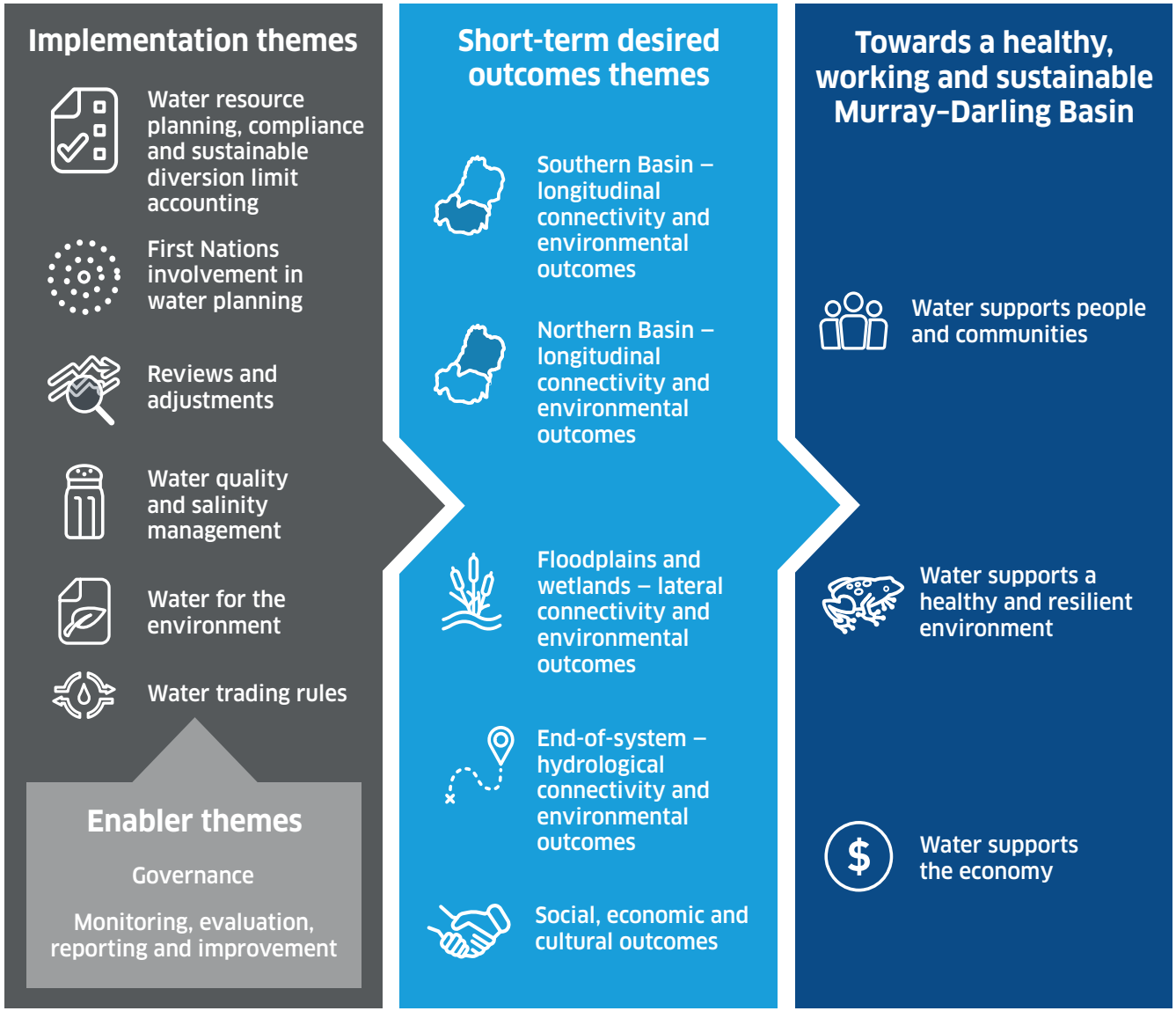
- **Recommendation 11** – Basin governments should **prioritise higher levels of continuing strategic investment in science and monitoring.** The new Australian Government Murray–Darling Water and Environment Research Program and the Basin governments Science Platform provide a much-needed foundation for an enduring Basin science program. Any framework and program of investment must be transparent and embed continuous improvement. The investment should also cement enduring collaborative relationships between researchers, communities and managers to improve use of the best available science to water management.
- **Recommendation 12** – **Science and monitoring information must be made more accessible for all Basin stakeholders** to improve the communication of Basin outcomes to the broader Basin community.

MDBA commitment:

The MDBA will work with Basin governments and stakeholders to develop an improved Basin-wide monitoring framework which considers social, cultural, economic and environmental themes. The MDBA will work with Basin governments and researchers to clearly identify roles and responsibilities and ensure integration of monitoring programs and improved access to data and information.

The MDBA will take an active role in facilitating access and application of information.

Themes used in the Evaluation of the Basin Plan



Evaluating the Basin Plan

Evaluating the Basin Plan is an opportunity for Basin governments to reflect on the past 8 years.

The Evaluation considers the changing landscape across the Basin, the effectiveness of the Basin Plan and whether outcomes are being achieved. It's also an opportunity to determine how we continue to improve the health of the Basin for everyone.

Evaluation approach

The MDBA has drawn on considerable independent expert advice throughout all stages of this evaluative process. This analysis, expert advice and feedback have come from the science community, independent advisors, the Australian Government and state governments, as well as Basin community and industry representatives.

At the time of this Evaluation there were several high profile reviews being undertaken in the Basin which sought stakeholder input. The MDBA has drawn on the input made to these other reviews, particularly the independent panel assessing social and economic conditions in the Basin led by Ms Robbie Sefton, as well as the work of the Interim Inspector-General for the Murray–Darling Basin and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

The Evaluation considers Basin Plan implementation across a range of themes and examines the outcomes themes (illustrated):

- Hydrological, water quality and environmental outcomes:
  - southern Basin
  - northern Basin

- end of system
- floodplains and wetlands
- water quality and salinity

- Social, economic and cultural outcomes.

Who has been involved in the Evaluation?

Basin communities, industries and interest groups are attentive to understanding the achievements, challenges and how these will shape future for water management in the Murray–Darling Basin.

This Evaluation has drawn from a wide range of sources. This includes:

- river operators
- the science community
- independent advisors
- various reviews, which included significant community, First Nations and other stakeholder input
- the Australian Government and Basin state and territory governments.

The MDBA has also built in several independent checkpoints to validate results and ensure that the Evaluation is a comprehensive assessment of implementation progress and outcomes at the Basin scale.

The Evaluation has examined and published available environmental, social and economic research to provide practical actions to guide our journey of continuous improvement.

The MDBA would like to acknowledge the wide range of individuals, experts and organisations who have contributed to the 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation.

Image: Paroo River near Currawinya National Park, Queensland

The 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation documents

A range of data, reports and other documents have been prepared as part of the 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation.

See the MDBA website for more information:
mdba.gov.au/2020evaluation

- The 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation Report
- The 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation – Southern Basin evidence report
- The 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation – Northern Basin evidence report
- The 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation – End of system evidence report
- The 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation – River connections evidence report
- The 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation – Social, economic and cultural evidence report
- The 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation – Plan implementation evidence report
- The 2020 Basin Plan Evaluation – Hydrological analysis evidence report
- The Murray–Darling Basin Tree Stand Condition Tool Hindcast Report
- Trends and historical conditions in the Murray–Darling Basin
- Plausible hydroclimate futures for the Murray–Darling Basin
- Vulnerabilities to climate change in the Murray–Darling Basin

Connect with us.
The MDBA has offices in Adelaide, Albury–Wodonga
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