

Roles and responsibilities for Murray–Darling Basin water reforms

- In broad terms, the roles and responsibilities for water reform in the Murray-Darling Basin are as follows:
- The **Minister for Water** approves the Basin Plan (and any amendments), approves the use of program funding (water recovery, SDL adjustment measures etc.), considers evaluations of overall progress, and chairs the MDB Ministerial Council.
 - **Department of the Environment** is responsible for policy advice and program implementation, in particular investing in water recovery and SDL adjustment measures. The Department also chairs the Basin Officials Committee.
 - **Murray–Darling Basin Authority** oversees implementation of the Basin Plan, including the Sustainable Diversion Limits, reporting direct to the Minister. MDBA also operates the River Murray system on behalf of Basin Governments, for which it reports to the Ministerial Council.
 - **Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder** manages the use of Commonwealth-held environmental water consistent with the Basin Plan, to achieve best possible environmental outcomes.
 - **Basin States** own water and are responsible for allocating it to licence holders consistent with their water resource plans. They also hold and deliver environmental water, and are responsible for implementing the Basin Plan in their own jurisdictions.
 - **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission** provides advice to the Minister on water market rules and water charge rules which are intended to free up trade and regulate costs of monopoly infrastructure (e.g. access to irrigation schemes), and to monitor and enforce these rules.
 - **Productivity Commission** conducts 5 yearly audits of Basin Plan implementation.

		Minister for Water	Department of the Environment	Murray–Darling Basin Authority	Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder	Basin States
REVIEWS	SDL Adjustment Process	Support SDL adjustment package through Ministerial Council. Adopt amendments to Basin Plan giving effect to the proposed SDL adjustment.	As Chair of BOC, facilitate agreed package of SDL adjustment measures (see State role). Implement efficiency measures program and part-fund states to implement supply measures.	Develop method for assessing ‘supply’ measures based on Basin Plan (done). Apply method and modelling to determine amount of adjustment. Advise Minister on proposed SDL adjustment to Basin Plan.		Develop proposed supply measures. Agree on package of SDL adjustment measures by 30 June 2016.
	Constraints	Support constraints measures as part of SDL adjustment package. Note that some constraints projects are also likely to be SDL adjustment projects.	Manage \$200 million to address constraints.	Develop Constraints Management Strategy. Provide technical advice to states on measures to best implement the strategy, where requested.	Input as required.	Develop proposals to address constraints by mid-2016. Implement agreed measures.
	Northern Basin Review (mid 2016)	Adopt any proposed amendments to Basin Plan and revisions to water recovery strategy in light of northern basin review.	Participate in the review. Consider changes to water recovery strategy in light of the review.	Conduct ‘triple bottom line’ review to test if there is a case to change SDLs or pattern of water recovery in the northern Basin. Advise Minister on amendments to Basin Plan and changes to water recovery strategy based on the review.	Participate in the review.	Qld and NSW are participating in the review. They will need to advise on their preferred apportionment of the ‘downstream’ component before the review is finalised. Provide views on any proposed amendments to Basin Plan.
WATER RECOVERY	Buybacks & Infrastructure	Decide on water recovery strategy.	Implement the Commonwealth's water recovery strategy including cap on buybacks, and recovery of water for enhanced environmental outcomes (efficiency measures) under the SDL adjustment mechanism.	Monitor and report progress with water recovery ('Bridging the Gap').	Input as required.	Work with Commonwealth to identify ways to maximise water savings made through existing and proposed infrastructure projects (IGA).
BASIN PLAN	Prepare & implement Basin Plan	Adopt Basin Plan (done). Consider regular reports on Basin Plan implementation, including those to Ministerial Council.	Input to draft Plan (done). As BOC Chair, facilitate development of agreed state comments (done).	Develop Basin Plan including consultation with states and stakeholders (done). Enforce Basin Plan including through annual assessment of state SDL compliance.		Advise state views on draft Basin Plan (done). States report on SDL compliance post 2019.
	State Water Resource Plan (WRP) Accreditation	Decision to accredit each state WRP based on MDBA advice. There are 36 plans required by 2019.		Assess state water resource plans and advise Minister on their accreditation.		Prepare WRPs suitable for C’wealth accreditation.
	Environmental water planning and delivery	Considers reports on use of environmental water.		Set long term outcomes for environmental watering across Basin (done) and set annual priorities. Support coordination of environmental watering.	Manage Commonwealth environmental water holdings consistent with the Basin Plan.	Prepare valley-based long term environmental watering plans and annual priorities. Have regard to MDBA published priorities when conducting environmental watering.
	Water Trade	Makes Water Market and Charge Rules on advice of ACCC (done).	Participate in water market as per water recovery strategy.	Ensure compliance with Basin Plan water trading rules.	Manage Commonwealth water portfolio – including trading – in accordance with Water Act (under review).	Implement state trade rules consistent with Basin Plan trade rules and processing trades.
	Monitoring and evaluation	Consider 5 yearly evaluations and PC audits.	Annual and five yearly reports on water recovery and investment to MDBA.	Monitor and evaluate economic and social outcomes across Basin with input from Dept on investment. Monitor and evaluate environmental outcomes with input from CEWO and States. PC to audit each 5 years.	Monitoring and evaluation of CEWO watering activities. Annual and five yearly reports to MDBA.	Monitoring and evaluation of environmental outcomes at valley/local scale. Annual and five yearly reports to MDBA.