Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Murray–Darling Communities Investment Package

The Murray–Darling Basin Plan is a long-term $13 billion investment in Australia's most important food bowl, its people and its environment. The Australian Government is putting communities and jobs at the heart of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan.

To achieve a sustainable and certain future for the Basin, its people, industries and environment the Australian Government has set out a package comprising 11 actions and supported by over $230 million in funding.

Our commitment

- Invest in community resilience and river health
- Build trust, transparency and accountability in government
- Improving implementation of the Basin Plan

Actions

- Stronger leadership
- Stronger compliance
- Better information
- Better monitoring and reporting of social, economic and environment conditions
- Investing in rivers and wetlands
- Investing in communities
- Supporting First Nations Australians
- Investing in off-farm water efficiency projects
- Designing and delivering water programs in partnership with communities
- Delivering environmental outcomes for the Riverland
- Strengthening working relationships between the Australian Government, states and local government to improve delivery of the Basin Plan

Murray–Darling Communities Investment Package

Invest in community resilience and river health

What we are doing	How we will do it
Maximising the benefits of the Basin Plan for communities	▸ Deliver $34 million for economic assistance to communities struggling with the effects of water recovery by extending the successful competitive grants Murray–Darling Basin Economic Development Program.
Improving river health for all users	▸ Deliver $20 million to fund community-driven grants for on-ground projects that will improve the health of rivers and wetlands.
Delivering environmental outcomes for the Riverland	▸ Deliver $37.6 million in practical projects to sustain Riverland environments. We will work with the South Australian Government to deliver projects. This action recognises that there have been delays in progress towards securing an additional 450 GL of water to improve river health and habitats on the lower Murray. ▸ We remain committed to recovering the 450 GL in a way that supports Basin communities.
Supporting First Nations Australians to play an active role in river health	▸ Deliver $3.1 million for a new First Nations river rangers program, creating more than 20 jobs. ▸ This builds on an existing commitment of $40 million for an Aboriginal water entitlements program.

Build trust, transparency and accountability in government

What we are doing	How we will do it
Providing stronger leadership	▸ Build a culture of genuine engagement and trust with communities and between governments. ▸ Appointment of Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston AK, AFC (Ret'd) to provide strong and strategic leadership as Chair of the Murray–Darling Basin Authority.
Ensuring stronger compliance	▸ Establish a statutory and independent Inspector-General of Water Compliance. This will bring together the water compliance role of the Murray–Darling Basin Authority with the assurance role of the Interim Inspector-General of Murray–Darling Basin Water Resources. ▸ Deliver $38.7 million to improve Commonwealth water compliance functions. ▸ This builds on the Commonwealth's existing commitment of $60 million for improvements in water metering and remote sensing.
Providing better information	▸ Bring together water information from across governments in a more accessible format for water users and communities. ▸ The detailed platform will provide a one-stop shop for water storage, in-stream flows and trade information.
Better monitoring and reporting of social, economic and environment conditions	▸ Invest $7.5 million in monitoring and reporting on the social, economic and environmental conditions in the Basin. ▸ This builds on a $20 million investment in Basin-specific research so river management can be based on the best available science.

Improving implementation of the Basin Plan

What we are doing	How we will do it
Designing and delivering water programs in partnership with communities	▸ Seek community input and demonstrate how that feedback has been used in the design, delivery and evaluation of programs.
Investing in off-farm water efficiency projects to increase water recovery	▸ Work with the states and irrigation networks to identify projects to generate water savings through off-farm infrastructure. We will shift our focus away from on-farm water efficiencies and not do buybacks.
Strengthening working relationships between the Australian Government, states and local government	▸ Work with Basin states to accelerate planning and delivery of supply and constraints projects that are at risk of not being delivered by 2024. We will partner with the National Water Grid Authority on these projects. ▸ Develop a new National Partnership to provide states funding for new and ongoing activities required to implement the Basin Plan.