



Australian Dairy Industry Council Inc.

Media Release

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Latest Basin Plan is yet another bag of tricks

For immediate release

The latest Murray Darling Basin Plan remains an exercise in maximising buybacks and undermining the viability of regional industries and communities, the Australian Dairy Industry Council said today.

ADIC chair Chris Griffin said the dairy industry supported an adjustable Sustainable Diversion Limit mechanism, but not the proposed formula.

“This formula is designed to ensure that any reductions through environmental works will be offset by infrastructure savings,” Mr Griffin said.

“We believe the Murray Darling Basin Authority does not have the will or capacity to resolve this matter and we call on Minister Burke to conclude the discussions with the States in line with the recent consensus document.”

ADIC Basin Response Taskforce chair Daryl Hoey said the MDBA was trying to move the goalposts on environmental offsets and infrastructure savings at the 11th hour.

“It is disturbing that the MDBA is refusing to assess The Living Murray environmental works as potential offsets, despite promising to do so in its hydrological reports¹ in February,” Mr Hoey said.

“Equally concerning is that any additional savings from new infrastructure works or on-farm efficiencies won’t count as reductions against the 2750GL benchmark. That leaves buybacks as the only option to close the gap.

“The dairy industry is already facing significant pain of adjustment in water affordability and availability even if the Government did not buy back another drop,” Mr Hoey said. “Yet here we have the MDBA coming up with a formula to support continued buyback tenders.”

Mr Hoey said the dairy industry supported:

- An adjustable SDL mechanism operating within a net range of at least plus or minus 6%, which translated to a water recovery range of 2100-3400GL.
- A 2100GL cap on water recovery in the form of entitlements, including buyback; current and future infrastructure savings projects; and, current and future on-farm works.
- A Commonwealth commitment for no further buybacks before the SDL adjustment review, unless the proposal is community-led, community-supported, and agreed by the relevant State.

¹ *Hydrologic modelling to inform the proposed Basin Plan: Methods and results*, February 2012, pp196, 200, 201, 203.

- The Living Murray works fully included in the assessment for potential SDL offsets.
- An explicit work program that pools the remaining buyback and infrastructure funding, and prioritises its investment into environmental works and measures, improved river operations, and further water-saving infrastructure and on-farm works.

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