

Joint Murray-Darling Basin Authority - Basin Community Committee clarifies issues confronting Basin

A joint meeting of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and its Basin Community Committee held at Albury today was provided a with clear set of issues confronting Basin communities in the development of the new Basin Plan.

Authority Chair Mr Mike Taylor said the meeting heard that some of the issues uppermost in the minds of communities across the Basin included:

- social and economic impacts of the Plan;
- how the Authority was assessing the best science;
- how environmental assets would be managed;
- the scale of sustainable diversion limits;
- Indigenous rights to water; and
- how the Basin Plan would intersect with state water resources plans,

“The meeting was an excellent opportunity for Authority members and community representatives to exchange views on the development of the new Basin Plan.

“It was also extremely valuable to hear the wide ranging views from across the community at the public information and engagement session held this morning,” he said.

“We now have a comprehensive picture of the water and environmental issues that confront Basin communities and this will help us check that we have identified the highest priority issues and will enhance our decision-making process.”

The Authority’s centrepiece task is to develop a major Basin-wide plan to sustainably manage the water resources across the entire Basin. A draft plan will be issued for public comment and consultation in mid 2010 and the final will go to the Commonwealth Minister in 2011.

The Authority members are: Mike Taylor (Chair); Professor Barry Hart; Dr Diana Day; David Green; Dianne Davidson; and Rob Freeman (Chief Executive).

The 16-member Basin Community Committee - chaired by Joan Burns – advises the Authority on community issues in relation to the proposed Basin Plan and also provides a community perspective for the Authority and the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council on a wide range of water resource, environmental, cultural and socioeconomic matters.

The committee members are: Danielle Anderson , Sarah Nicholas, Les Gordon, Jeff Parish , Cheryl Buchanan , Russell Pell, Joan Burns (Chair), Kathryn Ridge, Arlene Buchan , Matthew Rigney, Ian Falconer, Guy Roth, Mary-Lou Gittins, Dick Thompson, Henry Jones, and Rory Treweeke.

After their joint meeting the Community Basin Committee members inspected the Kiewa Valley, hosted by the North-East CMA and Murray CMA, to get an insight into local landscape, water management and community issues in the area.

For more information on the developing Basin Plan go to www.mdba.gov.au

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