

# Appendix C — Irrigation district community profiles

## Introduction

This appendix provides detailed profiles for 12 key irrigation areas within the Murray–Darling Basin, prepared by Marsden Jacob Associates as part of the economic and social profiles and impact assessments in the Murray–Darling Basin project (outlined in Sections 3.5 and 4.3 of volume 2, part 1, *Guide to the proposed Basin Plan: technical background*).

The objective of the project was to develop a deep understanding of the economic and social circumstances of the Basin’s communities and assess the vulnerability and adaptive capacity of irrigation-dependent communities.

The project sought to inform the Murray–Darling Basin Authority’s understanding of the likely impacts of reducing current diversion limits at farm, industry and local community levels.

This regional profiling and impact analysis provides a more detailed understanding of the current situation faced by farms, farming sectors and communities in the Basin than can be obtained by broader economic modelling.

The regional consultations from which these profiles were developed comprised two main elements:

1. Stakeholder engagement meetings — these involved approximately 250 targeted interviews with representatives of stakeholder groups, including local government, industry sector bodies, catchment management authorities, irrigation companies and associations, food processing companies, regional businesses, state agencies and rural finance advisers. Consultations were led by individuals with extensive experience of the Basin’s regions.
2. Community discussion — this involved a telephone survey of approximately 1,300 households, including those of irrigators, dryland farmers and regional businesses. Key objectives were:
  - to understand how respondents had adapted to dry conditions in the Basin in recent years
  - to understand how farms may adjust to future water availability
  - to obtain a grassroots understanding of the situation of households in the region — their issues, opportunities, risks, constraints and aspirations.

It is important to note that this analysis of the potential social and economic impacts of reductions in current diversion limits starts with the assumption that no transitional support or assistance will be provided by government and, as such, represents an extreme scenario of what could occur.

The Australian Government has clearly indicated that this will not be the approach. Nevertheless, the scenario of ‘no impact mitigation’ is a useful starting point of understanding, and is the ‘base case’ from which to evaluate the costs and benefits of targeted adaptation assistance programs.

The irrigation districts covered by the 12 profiles are:

- Borders Rivers
- Gwydir
- Namoi
- Macquarie
- Lower Balonne
- Lachlan
- Murrumbidgee
- NSW Central Murray
- Goulburn Murray Irrigation District, including:
  - Victorian Murray
  - Goulburn–Broken
  - Campaspe
  - Loddon
- Nyah to Border (including Sunraysia, Victoria and NSW)
- SA Riverland
- SA River Murray below Lock 1

This material has previously been made publicly available through the Murray–Darling Basin Authority website.