

# Murray–Darling Basin ministers meet in Melbourne

11 March 2016

The Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council met in Melbourne today to progress matters relating to implementation of the Basin Plan.

The council is chaired by the Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP (Commonwealth). Also participating were the Hon. Niall Blair MP (NSW), the Hon. Lisa Neville MP (Victoria), the Hon. Anthony Lynham (Queensland) and the Hon. Ian Hunter (South Australia). Officials attended on behalf of Mr Simon Corbell MLA (ACT). Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources (Commonwealth), was also in attendance.

Ministers discussed progress with the sustainable diversion limit (SDL) adjustment mechanism—a key process for improving the socio-economic and environmental outcomes of the Basin Plan—and the projects state governments are developing to implement it. They noted their ongoing commitment to developing project proposals in time for inclusion in the final package by mid-2016.

Ministers emphasised the importance of Basin states working together to consider how best to integrate their proposals for measures to ease river flow constraints, and make sure community consultation is done to ensure options are developed to mitigate any third party impacts.

Ministers requested that officials advise the council prior to its next meeting on how to achieve the best possible outcomes from the agreed package at 30 June 2016.

Ministers agreed that officials would advise on opportunities and a process to enable a wider range of environmental projects, such as measures to control carp, to provide triple bottom line benefits under the Basin Plan post 30 June 2016.

The MDBA provided ministers with an update on the Northern Basin Review, which is exploring different diversion limits for the northern basin.

Ministers also discussed the continued collaboration to minimise as far as possible the impacts of widespread blue-green algae in the southern basin. Victoria and New South Wales are working closely together, and will provide timely information to South Australia. Ministers were reassured by the efforts of federal, state and local agencies to take appropriate action and keep communities informed, but noted that communities and other water users were likely to continue to be affected by the algal bloom for as long as the hot and dry conditions continue.

The next Ministerial Council will be held in April 2016.

Ends

**For further information, contact MDBA media: (02) 6279 0141**

