



Australian Government



Adjusting sustainable diversion limits

The Basin Plan sets sustainable diversion limits, which is how much water can be used in the Murray-Darling Basin, while leaving enough water to sustain natural ecosystems.

To provide flexibility, the Basin Plan includes a mechanism to adjust sustainable diversion limits in the Basin.

The Adjustment Mechanism requires a suite of projects to be implemented – some projects allow Basin Plan environmental outcomes to be achieved with less water. This means that more water can remain in the system for other users, including households, industry and irrigated agriculture. Other projects improve water use so it's more efficient.

Supply and efficiency projects

Adjusting sustainable diversion limits works in two parts:

- a package of 36 supply projects aims to achieve the equivalent environmental outcomes that 605 GL of water would achieve
- efficiency projects are activities that change water use practices and save water for the environment.

Key facts

The option to adjust sustainable diversion limits was built into the Basin Plan so the Plan is flexible and able to adapt.



Adjusting sustainable diversion limits is a **key step in implementing the Basin Plan**.



Through these projects, **environmental outcomes are being sought**, but with less water.



605 gigalitres (GL) of water can remain available for communities.



Efficiency projects aim to **provide 450 GL** more water for the environment.



The suite of **36 supply projects** have bi-partisan support.



Projects are implemented by Basin states. Each project is different and will be designed and implemented in customised ways.



All Basin governments are committed to implementing both supply and efficiency projects **between now and 2024**.

Supply projects

Supply projects are improved ways to manage the southern Basin's rivers to more efficiently deliver water for the environment.

The 36 supply projects, nominated by Basin state governments, include environmental works and changes to river operating rules, which achieve environmental outcomes, with less water. Some projects involve removing constraints on rivers to better deliver water. Constraints projects can include changes to physical features such as crossings and bridges. They can also change river practices and rules. Constraints projects will be co-designed with landholders and local communities.

Any changes to flow rates over the long term will include consultation with all potentially affected land holders, industries and communities.

Each project is different and will be designed and implemented in customised ways. Some projects are already underway, while others are still in the early stages of design.

Basin state governments will work with local communities and affected landholders to consider local needs.

Efficiency projects

Efficiency projects are activities that change water use practices and save water.

Efficiency measures make more water available for the environment through water efficiency projects in agriculture, water delivery, industrial and urban settings.

Projects include upgrading irrigation systems, lining water delivery channels or installing water meters, along with water productivity improvements in manufacturing or irrigated agriculture, or changes to urban water management practices to reduce water use.

Efficiency projects work with supply projects to achieve the outcomes of the Basin Plan. Funding for supply projects will be reliant on Basin state governments delivering efficiency projects.

The confirmation of the supply projects in Australian Parliament has triggered the beginning of new efficiency projects.

Basin governments are committed to working together to ensure efficiency projects have neutral or beneficial socio-economic outcomes.

Roles and responsibilities

Adjusting sustainable diversion limits requires the cooperation of all Basin state and territory governments and the Australian Government agencies involved in water management.

- **Basin state governments** nominated the suite of 36 supply projects. They are responsible for delivering these projects, including consulting with communities on detailed design and implementation.
- **The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment** will manage the efficiency projects. All projects are funded by the Australian Government.
- **The Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA)** will assist Basin state governments with the implementation of the supply projects. The MDBA will provide technical support and information, particularly for river operations and will coordinate projects across Basin states. The MDBA will play a key role in monitoring the integrity of the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism and the package of projects.

Monitoring and evaluation

Basin governments have agreed to an adaptive management approach. Projects will be refined based on new information and innovations, as well as lessons from past and current activities.

This is just the start of the process. Basin state and territory governments have until 2024 to complete the projects, and will work with communities, industries and experts on project design and implementation.

The Basin Plan provides the MDBA with the option to undertake a reconciliation of the 2017 adjustment to sustainable diversion limits, if needed. Reconciliation tests if the package of supply projects, as implemented in 2024, has delivered the expected environmental outcomes.



Connect with us.

The MDBA has offices in Adelaide, Albury-Wodonga, Canberra, Goondiwindi, Griffith, Mildura, Murray-Bridge, Toowoomba, and regional engagement officers around the Basin.

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