

Recommendation on the accreditation of the proposed South Australian Murray Region Water Resource Plan

Murray-Darling Basin Authority

Recommendation

1. The Murray-Darling Basin Authority ('the Authority') has considered and assessed the proposed South Australian Murray Region Water Resource Plan ('proposed WRP') for the South Australian Murray Region WRP area ('WRP area') (**Attachment A** to Agenda Item 24 of Murray-Darling Basin Authority Meeting Number 127) provided by South Australia on 13 November 2018 consistent with s63(1)(a) of the *Water Act 2007* (Cth) ('the Act').
2. The Authority is satisfied that the proposed WRP is consistent with the relevant Basin Plan (*Basin Plan 2012* (Cth), version F2017C00078, registered on 23 January 2017 and ending on 13 November 2017) ('Basin Plan'), as is required by section 55(2) of the Act including:
 - a. the requirements for water resource plans ('WRPs'), and
 - b. the long-term annual diversion limits ('SDLs') for the water resources of the WRP area.
3. In considering consistency the Authority has had regard to the legislative framework within which the proposed WRP operates, as is required by section 55(3) of the Act.
4. In exercising its powers and performing its functions, the Authority has had regard to the extent to which the proposed WRP is consistent with the Basin Plan (in accordance with section 56(1)(a) and (b) of the Act).
5. In arriving at its recommendation, the Authority has taken into account the proposed changes to the Baseline Diversion Limit ('BDL') in the WRP area. The Authority is satisfied that the revised estimate of the BDL used to calculate the SDL is based on the best available information and better reflects the level of diversion noted in Schedule 3 of the Basin Plan.
6. The Authority has also taken into account the nature of the water resources in the WRP area and their connections. The proposed WRP enables a coordinated approach to meeting the watering requirements between connected resources notwithstanding the water management rules and arrangements for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Ramsar site will largely be contained within the South Australian River Murray Water Resource Plan.

7. The Authority notes the surface water resources relevant to the majority of the plan area are highly ephemeral streams located to the north of the River Murray, and in the Murray Mallee area to the east of the River Murray. The surface waters of these areas do not have any significant connections to the River Murray and Lower Lakes. As such the revised BDL will not affect flows to the Coorong and Murray Mouth. Notwithstanding this, the Authority notes that South Australia is required to meet its obligations under the Basin Plan monitoring and evaluation program to manage the system consistent with the long-term water plan outcomes and targets for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth.
8. **On this basis the Authority gives the Minister the proposed WRP and recommends that the Minister accredit the proposed WRP.**
9. The Authority's detailed reasoning is set out in the document titled 'Water Resource Plan assessment report, proposed South Australian Murray Region Water Resource Plan December 2018'.