



# Basin Community Committee

*Bringing a community perspective to the Murray–Darling Basin*

## COMMUNIQUE

25 February 2021

The Basin Community Committee were delighted to meet in person in Canberra this month for the first time in over 12 months.

At the meeting, members had a lively discussion about the **capacity of the River Murray** and the risk of shortfall. The Committee heard a clear, plain-English explanation of deliverability issues involving the Barmah Choke, and encouraged wider community discourse on the issue – without blame, and with a focus on the future. Members noted the Murray-Darling Basin Authority was holding a public webinar on the issue, so all communities can experience the same presentation as provided to the Committee.

Members strongly encourage government to ensure that the legislation to implement the Office of the Inspector General and define the powers of the Office Holder are introduced to Parliament as soon as possible. **Compliance** is an issue right across the Basin and this step is urgently needed to give confidence that all players are being treated equitably.

They received a good update from the Department of Agriculture Water and the Environment on the **Basin Communities Investment Package**, and encouraged Basin-wide engagement.

They discussed **climate variability** and reduced inflows, recognising that everyone in the Murray–Darling Basin is dealing with a hotter and drier climate. They embraced people’s ability to become more resilient, and called for policy settings to help people adjust and adapt. This is not just a ‘water’ issue, so there is a need for a whole of government approach to support regional communities.

On NSW **constraints**, members acknowledged a re-set of the program, and encouraged it to keep going. On **appointments** to the **Murray-Darling Basin Authority**, members welcomed the recent appointment of Indigenous member Rene Woods and recent reappointment of Susan Madden, and encouraged the appointment of the final Authority member as soon as possible.

**The Basin Community Committee is an independent advisory committee to the Murray–Darling Basin Authority and the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council. Established under the Water Act 2007, the Committee ensures the voices of diverse communities in the Basin are heard.**

For more information on the Basin Community Committee

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Regarding the **Northern Basin toolkit** measures, members are concerned with the lack of decisive action. They called upon those governments and organisations tasked with progressing the toolkit to move swiftly as upcoming deadlines are looming and progression has been slower than Basin communities would like.

In addition, members congratulated the Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations, Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority on the 2019 release of '[Rivers Veins of the Country](#)' which is 10 case studies of First Nations involvement in managing water for the environment in the Murray-Darling Basin.

Most members were able to attend this meeting in person, and were glad to be able to meet those members who commenced in May 2020. Throughout 2020 the Committee continued to meet virtually, and hopes more face-to-face meetings can happen during 2021.

See more information on:

- [Deliverability Risk in the River Murray System](#)
- [Murray-Darling Communities Investment Package](#)

## **BACKGROUND**

Members of the Committee were appointed by the Authority after an extensive selection process involving all Basin governments. They reflect the diverse perspectives of towns and communities across the Basin, as well as the diversity of experiences around water reform.

Contact your local Basin Community Committee member via [engagement@mdba.gov.au](mailto:engagement@mdba.gov.au) to share your views on how the Basin Plan is being implemented.

See a full list of members and map of their locations at [www.mdba.gov.au/BCC](http://www.mdba.gov.au/BCC)

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