



# Basin Community Committee

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

## COMMUNIQUE

22 October 2021

Meeting #69 of the **Basin Community Committee** was held as a virtual meeting on 14 October 2021. Throughout COVID 19 travel restrictions, the Committee has adapted its meeting practices to enable meetings to continue to take place. This ensures the ongoing work of the Committee continues as the Basin community views and values are highlighted.

At the meeting the members were pleased to hear an update on the activities of the **Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA)** from the Acting Chief Executive, Mr Andrew Reynolds and Authority member, Ms Susan Madden.

Following an update from the MDBA and Infrastructure NSW, members discussed the **Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism** program. Members shared the concerns of their communities in relation to the program, including the prescribed reconciliation process and projects being completed by 2024. The Committee recognises the risks associated with the timeline noting that some key projects may not be fully complete within the set timeframe and that greater flexibility in the reconciliation process is likely needed. Improved reporting on progress and outcomes, with a focus on delivery of environmental and community benefits is also important. The Committee appreciated a presentation from Infrastructure NSW on the **Reconnecting River Country** program, which places communities at the centre of activities.

The Committee noted that **Floodplain Harvesting** is a key area of interest for many communities across the Basin. They noted the importance of including this form of water take in the regulatory framework to provide greater accountability, and requested more detailed information be provided at its next meeting.

A key area of focus for the Committee is for increased **transparency about decision making** in water management. Following a recent meeting with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the Basin Official Committee (BOC), the Committee was pleased to renew its dialogue with the Ms Lyn O’Connell, Chair of BOC. The Committee welcomed Ms O’Connell’s report on the progress being made by BOC to increase transparency. The Committee commended the *Out of the BOCs* meeting summaries that follow BOC meetings and noted this as an important step forward for Basin committees. The Committee agreed to continue work on its transparency principles to ensure there is a focus on continuous improvement and a commitment to ongoing interaction and collaboration.

**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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Members were pleased to receive an update on the **Off-Farm Efficiency** program from the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. The Committee looks forward to ongoing conversations with the Department in the roll out of this program. The Committee continued to call for complementary measures to be considered seriously as a way of delivering outcomes and ownership within communities.

In providing their member insights to the Authority, members consistently reported improvement in catchment conditions and renewed optimism across most regional communities. However, it was noted that there are some areas that have received less rainfall. With strong commodity prices in the export market producers are enjoying a good season however labour shortages and the risk of mice increasing in number is a concern for several communities across the Basin.

### **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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