



**Department of  
Environment and  
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**To:** Dr Rhondda Dickson  
Chief Executive  
Murray-Darling Basin Authority

**From:** Adam Fennessy  
Secretary  
Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Victoria

**Statement of Assurance for Victoria for 2013-14**

In order to maximise transparency and to provide assurance to other parties and the community that the obligations of the Basin Plan are being implemented appropriately and in line with agreed arrangements under the Basin Plan 2012 Implementation Agreement, Victoria has completed a self-assessment of performance against its obligations under the *Basin Plan 2012* (refer to Table 1 and 2 below).

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, for the 2013-14 water accounting period, the information provided in the self-assessment attached to this statement accurately reflects the extent to which Victoria is compliant with the obligations under the *Basin Plan 2012*.

Adam Fennessy on behalf of Victoria.

ADAM FENNESSY

Name

Signature

21/10/14

Date

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**Table 1: Self-assessment checklist for Basin States (2013-14)**

<p><b>Basin Plan Implementation Agreement Tasks</b> (refer note 2)</p>	<p><b>Timing</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of standards and processes for delivering tasks</b></p>	<p><b>Compliance Status (Yes, No, Partial)</b>  (Refer note 3)</p>	<p><b>Commentary</b> (refer note 4)  (Summary of Note 4: For 'full compliance', may provide a good example or commentary; for 'no' or 'partial compliance', must explain the situation, actions taken or planned to ensure compliance at a specified future date, and describe any third party impediments that hindered compliance)</p>
<p><b>Task 19: Annual environmental watering priorities (Refers compliance status with sections 8.23 - 8.26 of the Basin Plan).</b></p>				
<p>Task 19.1: Identify annual environmental watering priorities for each water resource plan area.</p>	<p>By 31 May each year or as agreed.</p>	<p>Basin States will submit their annual environmental watering priorities or other relevant instrument as agreed with the MDBA, for the purposes of identifying the annual environmental watering priorities for the water resource plan areas.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Victorian Government can confirm it provided the Murray-Darling Basin Authority with a copy of Victoria's annual environmental watering priorities, consistent with the Basin Plan, on 30 May 2013.</p> <p>A copy of the relevant correspondence between the Department of Environment and Primary Industries and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority can be provided, if required.</p> <p>The VEWH's seasonal watering plan, which includes Murray-Darling Basin related watering priorities, can be found at <a href="http://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/">http://www.vewh.vic.gov.au/</a>,</p>
<p>Task 20.1: Identify possible cooperative arrangements that will support the delivery of environmental water in accordance with the priorities identified in the annual environmental watering priorities.</p>	<p>From the commencement of the 2013-14 water year.</p>	<p>The parties agree to identify possible cooperative delivery arrangements where appropriate, noting that decisions about the use of environmental water are a matter to be determined by the holders of held environmental water and managers of planned environmental water.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Victorian annual environmental watering priorities consider the availability of both planned and held environmental water from all water holders and managers, as well as the opportunity to use return flows for multi-site watering events.</p> <p>The VEWH and CEWH have recently executed a partnership agreement outlining how the organisations will work together to cooperatively deliver environmental water in Victoria.</p>

Basin Plan Implementation Agreement Tasks (refer note 2)	Timing	Summary of standards and processes for delivering tasks	Compliance Status (Yes, No, Partial) (Refer note 3)	Commentary (refer note 4)  (Summary of Note 4: For 'full compliance', may provide a good example or commentary; for 'no' or 'partial compliance', must explain the situation, actions taken or planned to ensure compliance at a specified future date, and describe any third party impediments that hindered compliance)
				The VEWH will continue to participate in coordination forums for the southern connected Murray system (e.g. the Living Murray Environmental Watering Group and the River Murray Water Operational Advisory Groups).
Task 20.2: Report when the Basin annual environmental watering priorities are not followed.	By 31 October 2014 and annually thereafter.	Where Basin Annual Environmental Watering Priorities (BAEWP) are not followed, Basin States will provide the MDBA with a statement of reasons as to why environmental watering has not been undertaken in accordance with the AEWP for the relevant water year.	Yes	N/A – Environmental watering was undertaken in accordance with Basin annual environmental watering priorities.
<b>Task 21: Targets for managing water flows (Refers compliance status with section 9.14 of the Basin Plan).</b>				
Task 21.1: Have regard to flow- related targets on dissolved oxygen, recreational water quality and levels of salinity when performing their functions and when making decisions about the use of environmental water.	From commencement of the Plan.	Schedule 12 of the Plan requires the parties to report on the extent to which they have had regard to the targets. (The <i>Basin Plan Schedule 12 Reporting Guideline</i> provides guidance on meeting the reporting requirements related to the obligations identified in Schedule 12).	Yes	Refer to comments provided in Victoria's 2013-14 Schedule 12 reporting response for Matter 14, Indicator 14.4 (Comments were provided to the MDBA by 31 October 2014, as part of Victoria's reporting obligations under Basin Plan Chapter 13, s13.14.)

<p align="center"><b>Basin Plan Implementation Agreement Tasks</b> <b>(refer note 2)</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Timing</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Summary of standards and processes for delivering tasks</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Compliance Status (Yes, No, Partial)</b> <b>(Refer note 3)</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Commentary</b> <b>(refer note 4)</b></p> <p align="center"><b>(Summary of Note 4:</b> For ‘full compliance’, may provide a good example or commentary; for ‘no’ or ‘partial compliance’, must explain the situation, actions taken or planned to ensure compliance at a specified future date, and describe any third party impediments that hindered compliance)</p>
<p><b>Task 23: Application of salinity targets for the purposes of long-term salinity planning and management (Refers compliance status with section 9.19 of the Basin Plan).</b></p>				
<p>Task 23.1: Apply salinity targets in the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement for salinity planning and management.</p>	<p>From commencement of the Plan.</p>	<p>The MDBA, the Basin Officials Committee, and Basin States are to undertake any long-term salinity planning and management functions in accordance with the targets in Appendix 1 of Schedule B of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement (including the Basin Salinity Management Strategy Operational Protocols).</p>	<p align="center">Yes</p>	<p>The State’s fulfilment of planning and management functions for the targets in Appendix 1 of Schedule B are reported through Victoria’s Basin Salinity Management Strategy (BSMS) Annual Report to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA). Victoria has submitted BSMS Annual Report 2013-14 to the MDBA for assessment by the Independent Audit Group (IAG), reporting against the long-term salinity targets in accordance with the Schedule B requirements. Victoria has an excellent track record of compliance with Schedule B, as confirmed by the Report of the Independent Audit Group for Salinity 2012-13.</p>
<p><b>Task 32: Reporting requirements (Refers compliance status with sections 13.14 and 13.15 of the Basin Plan).</b></p>				
<p>Task 32.1 Produce a report on each Basin State’s Category B matter listed in Schedule 12.</p>	<p>By 31 October 2014.</p>	<p>2013-14 reporting year: Basin States will provide reports based on their existing data.</p>	<p align="center">Yes</p>	<p>As required, Victoria has provided reports based on their existing data, for Basin Plan Schedule 12 reporting matters 6, 9, 10 and 14.</p>

**Table 2: Statement of reasons why watering not undertaken complying Basin Environmental Watering Priorities (BAEWP) for 2013-14 (Refer IA Task 20.2)**

Section 8.44 of the Basin Plan (2012) requires that: If a person undertakes environmental watering other than in accordance with the Basin annual environmental watering priorities, that person must give to the Authority a statement of reasons why environmental watering has not been undertaken in accordance with the Basin annual environmental watering priorities (8.44(1)). The person must give the statement to the Authority as soon as practicable, but in any event within 4 months after the end of the water accounting period in which the environmental watering was undertaken (8.44(2)).

	<b>Basin annual environmental watering (BAEWP) priorities for 2013–14</b>	<b>Please tick (x), where BAEWP not complied with</b>	<b>Statement of reasons why BAEP not followed</b>
1	<b>Northern Basin Wetlands:</b> Improve the resilience of colonial waterbird populations by supporting breeding events and improving breeding habitat in the Northern Basin wetlands.		N/A
2	<b>Gwydir Wetlands:</b> Improve the condition and maintain the extent of wetland vegetation communities in the Gwydir Wetlands (including Ramsar sites) by restoring hydrological connectivity and a flow regime that meets ecological requirements.		N/A
3	<b>Macquarie Marshes:</b> Improve ecosystem resilience amongst wetland vegetation communities in the Macquarie Marshes including Ramsar listed sites.		N/A
4	<b>Barwon–Darling River System:</b> Improve habitat and provide opportunities for migration and reproduction of native fish in the Barwon–Darling River system by increasing flow variability and hydrological connectivity.		N/A
5	<b>Mid-Murrumbidgee Wetlands:</b> Improve the condition of wetland vegetation communities in the mid-Murrumbidgee wetlands through a winter or spring fresh.		N/A
6	<b>Lower Goulburn River:</b> Improve habitat and provide opportunities for migration and reproduction of native fish in the lower Goulburn River through reinstating a variable flow regime which includes a large 'in-channel' spring/summer fresh.		N/A

	<b>Basin annual environmental watering (BAEWP) priorities for 2013–14</b>	<b>Please tick (x), where BAEWP not complied with</b>	<b>Statement of reasons why BAEP not followed</b>
7	<b>Mid-Murray River:</b> Improve habitat and provide opportunities for migration and reproduction of native fish in the mid-Murray River, including the Edward–Wakool and other smaller anabranches, distributary creeks and low-lying wetlands throughout the region.		N/A
8	<b>Lower Murray River System:</b> Improve vegetation condition in wetlands and floodplains and provide cues for native fish recruitment and movement in the lower Murray River system by enhancing in-stream flow variability.		N/A
9	<b>Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth:</b> Facilitate <i>Ruppia</i> recovery by ensuring appropriate flows into the Coorong; and maintain the connection between the Lower Lakes to improve the water quality in Lake Albert.		N/A

## Notes for Basin State SoA compliance

**Note 1** – Statements of Assurance are at jurisdictional rather than agency level. This means that where assurance is provided by the lead agency of a Basin State, it is provided as a single response covering all relevant agencies within that State.

**Note 2** – There are only a small number of obligations on Basin States for 2013-14. Coverage of assurance reporting will increase over time as further obligations arise. For example the Water Trading Rules commence on 1 July 2014 and will be reported in assurance statements for 2014-15 and beyond, the obligation on Basin States to develop long term environmental watering plans for each surface water resource plan area will be included in assurance statements for the in 2015-16. Water resource plans and Sustainable Diversion Limits become enforceable from 1 July 2019 and would be included in Statements of Assurance for 2019-20.

**Note 3** - An obligation may require action at one of three levels, Basin Plan level, water resource plan area level or at the SDL resource unit level. The obligation level will impact on the assessment as, for example, a Basin State may have more than one water resource plan area and have differing compliance status between these areas, meaning that a Basin State is fully compliant where the obligations relevant to all water resource plan areas are met.

Where, in the opinion of the Basin State, an obligation has been fully met (for example, where an obligation is required to be met for all water resource plan areas and it has been met for all as discussed above) the answer is **'Yes'**. Where, in the opinion of the Basin State, an obligation has not been met to any degree (for example, where an obligation is required to be met for all water resource plan areas and it has not been met in any) the answer is **'No'**. Where, in the opinion of the Basin State, an obligation has not been fully met but has been met to some degree (for example, where an obligation is required to be met for all water resource plan areas and it has been met for some but not all) the answer is **'Partial'**.

**Note 4** - Commentary is not required where the Compliance status is **'Yes'**; however, Basin States may provide commentary in these circumstances if desired. Where the 'Compliance status' is **'No'** or **'Partial'**, Basin States are asked to provide commentary on the details of the situation, the actions it has taken or plans to take that will ensure compliance at a future date and the date that compliance is expected to be achieved. The reporter should also describe any third party impediments out of their control which impact on their ability to comply with the obligation.

**Note 5** - Statements of Assurance are voluntary reports to the community and other stakeholders provided to the MDBA by agreement, to enhance the transparency of the implementation of the Basin Plan and further promote voluntary compliance. There is no statutory requirement on a Basin State to produce a Statement of Assurance (SOA) and SOA do not underpin the application of statutory enforcement action that the MDBA may elect to take from time to time. To ensure the ongoing integrity of the assurance process, the MDBA may undertake random audits of Statements of Assurance, either as specific audits or as elements of other audits. Audits will be undertaken in accordance with the MDBA's Audit Policy.

## Disclaimer

The publication of a Basin State's Statement of Assurance on the MDBA's website does not in any way indicate or imply that the MDBA agrees in part or whole with the statement. Nor does it mean that the MDBA has found the Basin State to be fully compliant with their obligations under the Basin Plan. The statement does not in any way act to reduce or alter the authority of the MDBA to enforce the Basin Plan where deemed appropriate.