



Out of the BOCs

The Basin Officials Committee (BOC) met via videoconference on 13 December 2021.

BOC endorsed the Barmah–Millewa Feasibility Study (the Study) Project Plan. The Study is being funded by the National Water Grid Authority under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund and will be delivered by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) on behalf of Basin governments. Given the strong level of public interest, BOC agreed to publish the Project Plan (detailing expected project workstreams, stakeholder engagement requirements and project risks) on the MDBA website. The Project Plan will be available in early 2022. The outcome of the Study will be a feasibility level options analysis that examines the potential benefits, costs, policy implications and risks of a broad range of options to maintain, and where possible reinstate, the regulated flow capacity through the Barmah Millewa Forest. The final report is due to be provided to the BOC and the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council in December 2022.

BOC welcomed an update from Mr Daryl Quinlivan AO on the development of the [water market reform roadmap](#) including the completion of draft December advice to Minister Pitt on initial opportunities for water market reform. Public consultation on the development of a water market reform implementation roadmap is gaining momentum via public webinars and meetings with key stakeholders including irrigation infrastructure operators and water brokers.

NSW provided an update on ongoing consultation efforts for the Better Baaka and Better Bidgee programs, confirming the focus on achieving a wide range of environmental, First Nations and other community outcomes while also delivering the best possible water savings for contribution to the 605GL Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) offset. Basin governments recognise community concern about how changes in any of the agreed SDLAM projects will affect the full 605GL adjustment and are working together to manage project delivery risks as well as opportunities to achieve agreed Basin Plan outcomes. Delivering the existing SDLAM projects will continue to be a major focus for all Basin governments.

BOC continues to prioritise improved transparency and accountability of joint government decision-making. At this meeting, the BOC agreed to continue to progress initiatives that align with their agreed transparency priorities of Basin Plan implementation, River Operations and water markets. The BOC acknowledged the important contribution of the [Basin Community Committee](#) in encouraging the BOC to continuously improve their efforts to increase transparency.

About the BOC

The BOC has six members – one senior official from each Basin jurisdiction including the Australian Government – and provides advice to both the MDBA and the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council on matters including Basin Plan implementation and Basin water management policy. The BOC also makes high-level decisions on River Murray operations.

BOC's 2021 workplan is aligned to deliver the priorities that Basin water ministers agreed in [November 2020](#):



Murray-Darling Basin
Basin Officials Committee

- *Support Basin communities through the Murray-Darling Communities Investment Package*
- *Implement the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, including delivery of supply and constraints, efficiency and toolkit measures*
- *Consider reform to the water market following the ACCC final report*
- *Address deliverability risks in the River Murray system.*

More information on the BOC is available on [its webpage](#).