

MDBA Reconciliation statement

1. The Murray–Darling Basin Authority’s adjustment to the sustainable diversion limits (SDLs) in 2017 lessened impacts on industry and communities by reducing the volume of water that needed to be recovered for the environment by 605 gegalitres.
2. Under the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism, Basin governments brought forward a package of 36 supply projects that, if implemented, will:
 - a. make both consumptive and environmental water use more efficient;
 - b. collectively improve management of the river system; and
 - c. optimise the use of available water in a way that delivers equivalent environmental outcomes to the original Basin Plan settings.
3. The Authority has an important role in monitoring the progress and outcomes of both supply and efficiency measure projects committed to by the states.
4. If these projects are not implemented in a way that secures the anticipated contributions, the SDLs will need to be re-determined. This would almost certainly mean that further water recovery would be required to bridge a re-opened gap.
5. If a significant change is proposed to the design and delivery of the projects, to provide certainty for all parties, the Authority would move to undertake a preliminary assessment of impact and to seek advice from the Basin Officials Committee. This would be done as soon as practicable.
6. Ultimately, a state’s failure to successfully implement these projects and not realise the anticipated outcomes, would be significant.
7. The Basin Plan establishes a reconciliation mechanism which enables the Authority to re-evaluate the SDL adjustment, should it determine it is appropriate to do so. The Authority would seek advice from basin governments. Any gap between the SDLs and Commonwealth water recovery would be identified.
8. The Commonwealth would then need to consider the best options to bridge the water recovery gap to ensure the outcomes of the Basin Plan are achieved. Again, it is likely that further water recovery would be required.
9. The Authority will continue to work closely with Basin states to support the completion of the supply and efficiency measures bought forward as part of the SDL adjustment mechanism.