



Australian Government



Murray-Darling  
Basin  
Authority



# Annual Report

2024–25



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**Cover:** Lachlan River, Wiradjuri Country, Cowra, New South Wales

**Contact details**

**Phone:**

1800 230 067 (free call)  
02 6279 0100  
(Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm AEST)

**Email:** [engagement@mdba.gov.au](mailto:engagement@mdba.gov.au)

**Postal address:**

Murray–Darling Basin Authority  
GPO Box 1801  
Ngunnawal Country, Canberra ACT 2601

**Website:** [mdba.gov.au](http://mdba.gov.au)

# Acknowledgement of First Nations

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (the MDBA) offers respect to the Traditional Owners of Country and other First Nations peoples living within the Murray–Darling Basin. We offer our respects to Elders past and present and to future leaders.

We acknowledge their enduring deep Cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to their lands and waters. First Nations people have been looking after Country in sophisticated ways for more than 65,000 years and continue to do so on behalf of their Nations and people.

We have heard many First Nations people express that when the lands and waters of Nations are not healthy, the people are unwell, and the ability to practice Culture and look after Country is impacted.

This includes being able to swim in the local waterways and harvest traditional foods and resources.

First Nations people see waterways as living entities and live by the principle that everything is connected. Since colonisation, land, water and people have been separated. This goes against the way First Nations people see Country.

First Nations people in the Basin have been excluded from decision-making processes about water. Water management laws have contributed to disparity and dispossession, as they were developed without recognising First Nations' sovereignty. We acknowledge this causes distress.

## **Cultural sensitivity**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this publication may contain images, names or quotes from deceased persons.



From the artwork *Rivers, for generations* by Amy Kilby, Wiradjuri artist

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# Letter to the Minister



## Office of the Chief Executive

Ref: EC25-000685

Senator the Hon Murray Watt  
Minister for the Environment and Water  
PO Box 6022  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

It is my pleasure to present the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) Annual Report for the 2024–25 financial year.

During the year the MDBA has continued to:

- drive the implementation of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan in collaboration with communities, governments, First Nations peoples, and industries of the Basin; and
- manage the River Murray system on behalf of Basin governments.

The MDBA Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth) and section 214 of the *Water Act 2007* (Cth) and complies with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*.

I would like to acknowledge the ongoing commitment of MDBA staff and their contribution to achieving a healthy, productive Murray–Darling Basin and together – *Rivers, for generations*.

Yours sincerely

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jacqui Hickey".

**Jacqui Hickey,**  
A/g Chief Executive

1 October 2025

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Office locations – First Nations Country  
Adelaide – Kurna | Albury – Wiradjuri | Canberra – Ngunnawal | Goondiwindi – Bigambul  
| Griffith – Wiradjuri | Mildura – Latji Latji | Murray Bridge – Ngarrindjeri

mdba.gov.au 1800 630 114 engagement@mdba.gov.au



# Part 1

## Overview

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# Foreword by the Authority Chair



*It has been a complex and often contentious process, but the commitment of communities, industries and governments to implement the Basin Plan is providing a permanent national legacy*

It is 13 years since governments agreed on a plan to work together, sharing the Basin's water resources for a more sustainable and resilient Murray–Darling Basin. More than 2000 gegalitres of consumptive water has been reassigned to the environment, farms have innovated and invested to produce more with less and water planning across jurisdictions has been more effectively co-ordinated.

It has been a complex and often contentious process, but the commitment of communities, industries and governments to implement the Basin Plan is providing a permanent national legacy.

In my first year as Chair of the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA), we have commenced a review of progress on the Basin Plan which will lead to advice to government on next steps.

I want to recognise the contribution of Sir Angus Houston, AK, AFC (Ret'd) whose tenure as Chair built trust with Basin communities and assisted in implementation of the Plan.

The 2024–25 financial year offered a point of reflection on what we have achieved from implementation of the Basin Plan and what more we need to do. The 2025 Basin Plan Evaluation (the Evaluation) we have prepared is a comprehensive assessment of Basin health and outcomes to date. It draws on environmental monitoring, inputs from Basin states and the experience of communities, First Nations people and industries.

Accompanying the Evaluation, we completed a Sustainable Rivers Audit and continued our engagement with First Nations. Through an ongoing dialogue we listened and acknowledged what First Nations people have said about water management in the Looking back to move forward report.

Matched with contemporary science, these reflections provide valued insights into the current health of the Basin, what is working and what can be improved. Basin Plan effectiveness and water management generally can be improved through better policy and programme design.

I'm pleased that the past 12 months have seen further development and more advanced thinking on potential reforms that can support productive industries and enhance outcomes for communities, First Nations and the environment through the Basin Plan Review.

In this work we have been assisted by the Basin Community Committee (BCC) and 6 Regional Community Forums, state governments, the First Nations Leadership Group, those representing peak industries and environmental organisations, and the many others.

I acknowledge also, the expertise of Susan Madden throughout her 8-year term on the Authority Board. In November 2024, we welcomed Allison Mudford and in March 2025, the appointment of the Belinda Duarte AM completed the 8-member Authority Board, which now includes additional First Nations representation.

The Basin Plan was made in 2012, and the Government acknowledged that the purpose, objectives and outcomes were not initially focused on improving outcomes for First Nations peoples. We must now do more to include First Nations people in water management and the MDBA continues to pursue this through the Basin Plan Review.

While the Review provides the opportunity to build a better Plan for the future, the challenges of running the river remained ever present. Following a string of very wet years, the seasons brought rainfalls and inflows more in line with the Basin's long-term average. Our river operators managed bulk transfers across River Murray storages in Autumn, achieving efficiencies, reducing evaporative losses, and meeting system and user demands.

As total River Murray system storages dipped below 44% into Winter, we were reminded of the very real pressures and competing demands placed on the Basin's water resources. The drier conditions of 2024–25 particularly in the southern Basin are a reminder that the next drought is just around the corner.

Maximising the returns achieved from environmental water is paramount, particularly for the hotter and drier future Basin we are anticipating. The MDBA must continue to operate an efficient and reliable River Murray System that ensures water reaches the people and places it is needed, when it is needed. Maintaining the safe and effective operation of river assets is part of the solution. I'm encouraged by the planning underway with Basin states to build a multi-year budget that can address the emerging risks of aging infrastructure – the weirs, locks and dams that support water security.

Delivery of the Framework for Integrated River Modelling (FIRM) tool and consolidation of the 24 river models into a single cloud-based system brought improved intelligence and modelling capability. Knowing where and how water moves across the Basin is critical, yet constraints remain where environmental water is unable reach floodplains and wetlands. The Constraints Relaxation Implementation Roadmap (the Roadmap) delivered December 2024 details some of the challenges we face.

The Roadmap calls for the sustained commitment of governments and communities over the forward decade. Easing constraints is crucial for achieving the Basin Plan's goals of protecting and restoring rivers, and maximising the environmental benefits of recovered water.

I thank our partners, members of the Board and the MDBA staff for their energy and commitment to manage the River Murray, implement the Basin Plan and progress the 2026 Review.

We enter the new financial year with deeper knowledge and understanding of the success and challenges that remain for water policy and management in the Basin.



**Daryl Quinlivan AO**  
Authority Chair

# Chief Executive's review



*It is my pleasure to present the Murray–Darling Basin Authority's annual report 2024–25 – a milestone year marked by bold implementation, scientific advancement, and building trust across the Basin*

At the heart of everything we do sits our purpose—**Rivers, for generations**. It is more than a motto. It is a driving energy that shapes our choices and our conversations as we work with communities, industry and all levels of government to deliver a sustainable and healthy Murray–Darling Basin.

Throughout the year, we maintained a strong focus on delivering our core functions: operating the River Murray system, ensuring water is managed efficiently and shared fairly, and supporting Basin governments to implement the Basin Plan. We also continued our preparations for the 2026 Basin Plan Review, sharing the foundational science and policy thinking that guide how we all get the best outcomes from the water available well into the future.

## **Progressing the Basin Plan Review**

The Review is our collective opportunity to build on our achievements from the past 13 years of Basin Plan implementation. It is our chance to do things better and smarter. It is not about starting again, but it is about modernising the Basin Plan to flex and adapt to future challenges of climate change, fluctuating water availability and the needs of Australia's industries, environment, Cultures and communities.

We made meaningful progress across several areas of the Review program. Following the release of the Early insight Paper in June 2024, we continued to share our thinking on the key issues and opportunities, including how to move beyond 'just adding water', prepare for a range of plausible climate futures and different management approaches that recognise the unique qualities of the northern and southern Basin.

Listening to and reflecting on the experience of the people who live and work in the Basin is essential to the Review. The 8 regional tours, numerous industry briefings and online webinars have maintained our strong connection to community, making sure we go beyond 'telling' you our early reform ideas, to really testing and refining our thinking with community, each step of the way.

The independent Looking back to move forward report has delivered on our commitment to document what First Nations have said publicly about water management in the Basin for the past decade. The report shows the limited progress made to advance outcomes for First Nations people of the Basin and acknowledges we can only walk forward from where we are.

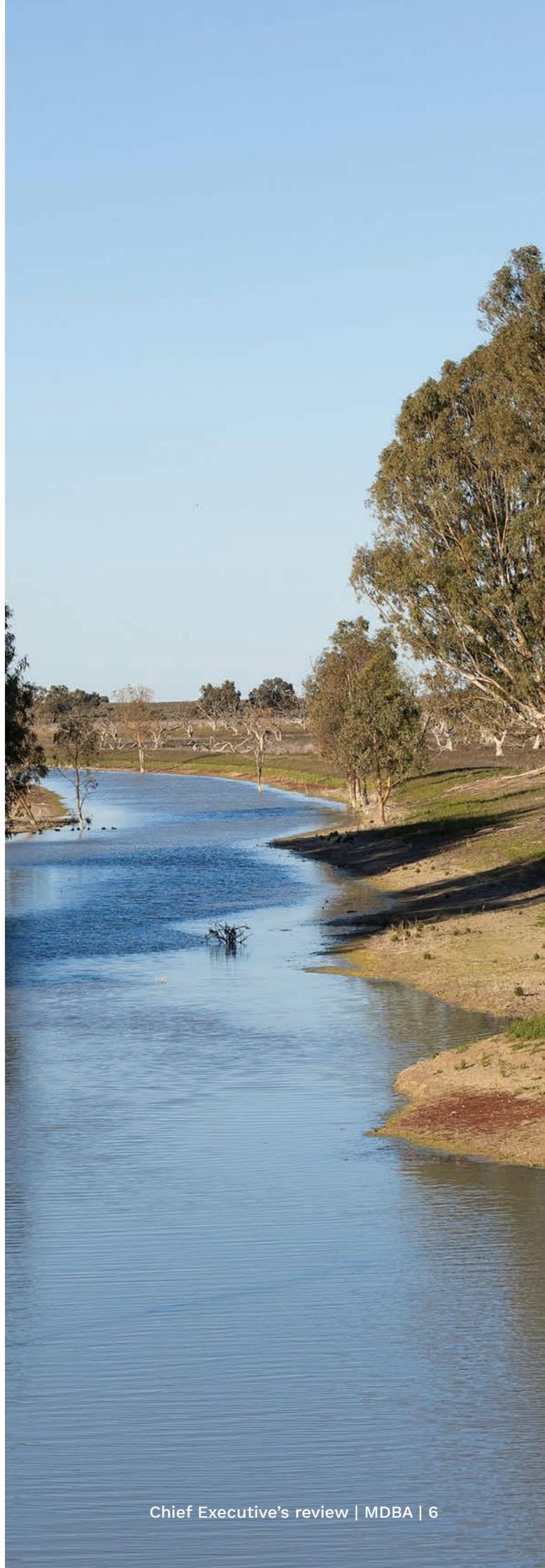
### **A significant boost to Basin science and knowledge**

To guide best-practice science and accountability we continued to seek the advice of independent experts and welcomed the appointment of resource economist Dr Robert Gillespie and First Nations members Dr Lynette Liddle and Professor Troy Meston to the Advisory Committee on Social, Economic and Environmental Sciences (ACSEES).

New science will provide one of the vital lines of evidence for the Review to support policy development and inform decisions. This year we significantly advanced the Basin science and knowledge base.

Successful completion of the Murray–Darling Water and Environment Research Program (MD-WERP) provided valuable new knowledge about environmental watering, ecosystem responses, and the challenges of managing a highly variable system. The research consortia of La Trobe University and the CSIRO working with academics, the MDBA and range of government partners generated a large body of new studies, papers and articles in peer-reviewed journals to advance Basin management. More importantly, this multi-year program has developed enduring partnerships between like-minded organisations and researchers, who will continue to collaborate, share and apply scientific capability for the benefit of our Basin eco-systems, water planning and on-ground action.

Our science has also demonstrated a pathway to blend western and First Nations knowledge. The Tati Tati Cultural Water Futures project is a first of its kind pilot study for the MDBA working with a Traditional Owner group to understand climate-related risks.



Projects designed with and backed by community have continued to address the gaps in Basin knowledge through Basin Condition Monitoring Program (BCMP). This year we supported enhancements in socio-economic reporting, produced community oral histories and demonstrated the powerful application of environmental DNA (eDNA) technologies to track biodiversity and eco-system health.

With the energy of hundreds of citizen scientists across the Basin, the eDNA spring sampling for the Great Australian Wildlife Search identified more than 150 species in rivers, lakes and wetland, including 18 threatened and vulnerable species of native fish and vertebra. Now in its second year of sampling, the data from this project will help inform changes in species prevalence and movement, providing another line of evidence for better decision making on integrated land and water management.

These partnerships and scientific deliverables are just some of the achievements to boost the Basin knowledge base. As we enter the year ahead the MDBA will continue to share and communicate the science that underpins our work including through the release of the 2025 Basin Plan Evaluation and the Sustainable Rivers Audit, the Murray–Darling Basin Sustainable Yields and the Outlook for the Basin.

### **Running the river to Basin conditions**

A return to drier conditions across the Basin tested the operational agility of our river operators this year. While inflows to the River Murray System were less than half the long-term median, our river management team worked collaboratively with state partners to ensure water was provided when and where it was needed.

The dry winter and spring saw an earlier start to bulk water transfers. These transfers remained in channel and the strategic use of environmental water meant we were able to piggyback on higher river flows to reach floodplains and wetlands. This adaptive management has been essential in maintaining the improved health of 6 of the 7 Living Murray icon sites, which for another year have achieved A and B condition ratings.

While farmers and communities in Australia's south demonstrated resilience through a very dry season, heavy rains and flooding in the north saw the much-needed arrival of more than 970 gigalitres (GL) to replenish storages at Menindee Lakes. At the close of the water year, active storage across the system sat at 56% capacity. The dry planning outlook for the year ahead will require active management to meet demands and deliver the multiple environmental watering events to support river health.

Where we can get environmental water to floodplains and wetlands we are seeing results, but constraints remain, and the risks associated with ageing infrastructure challenge water security and supply. Relaxing constraints will take sustained effort over the forward decade and is essential to achieving the full benefits from environmental watering and the most value from water that has been recovered. We know this from the detailed assessment outlined in the Constraints Relaxation Implementation Roadmap that the MDBA delivered to the Commonwealth government in December 2024.

On the infrastructure front, we redesigned the joint programs workplan this year and worked with governments in an effort that will advance a multi-year budget essential to support priority maintenance and replacement of critical river assets. Some of the Basin infrastructure has been operating for more than century, including Lock 3 in South Australia, which celebrated its one hundredth year with vital refurbishment works. In May we announced early works with Goulburn–Murray Water to design a replacement for the Mildura weir. Both structures have supported essential water delivery, navigation and recreation in the Basin for generations and it is crucial that we maintain them for generations to come.

### **Enhancing water management and capability**

At Menindee Lakes we have worked collaboratively with the NSW government to progress a business case for permanent fish passage. We have also made good progress in completing the first phase of the Menindee Operating Review to better understand the

Cultural, environmental, social and economic values for the region. Holding firmly to our partnerships with Basin governments, the MDBA aims to identify management opportunities and solutions that can enhance ecological resilience of Menindee Lakes and improve connectivity in the Lower Darling-Baaka.

The 5-yearly review of the Basin-wide Environmental Watering Strategy resulted in a refined approach this year. The new watering strategy continues the coordinated and aligned planning across jurisdictions to enhance outcomes for fish, birds and vegetation, while enabling additional benefits to be pursued for an economic boost.

Beyond the joint planning and prioritisation of environmental watering, our ability to effectively manage water resources and connectivity across the Basin was strengthened by investment in tools, data and people. Delivery of the Integrated River Modelling Uplift (IRMU) program improved our capacity to simulate complex hydrological scenarios and support transparent, science-based management at catchment and Basin scales. The FIRM tool completed on time and on budget for June 2025 consolidation of the 24 river models into a single cloud-based system, while MDBA funded positions for additional hydrological modellers in state government agencies has uplifted capability across the Basin.

### **A maturing organisation with clear purpose and commitment**

We continued to build our organisation's leadership capability, accountability and culture, while embedding accountability and engagement at the heart of our work. I am encouraged by the energy and personal growth of our people, supported this year through the Leading with Purpose and Catalytic Ways of Working programs.

The challenges of managing the Basin's water resources and delivering outcomes under a changing climate are significant. Meeting those challenges will require exceptional leadership, and a collaborative mindset from all our staff across the Basin. Living our value of being in community, we maintained our commitment to transparency, listening and learning.

With the ambitious portfolio of science, program delivery and implementation achieved this year, I am grateful to our partners, First Nations people and the many who have engaged through our regional community forums, Peaks groups and the BCC. Your passion, experience and commitment to a sustainable and productive Basin have shaped our work and enabled the essential flow of information and understanding.

The continued involvement of communities and stakeholders is essential as we lead into a crucial year of remaining Basin Plan implementation and firm up the policy ideas we take to the 2026 Review. To this end, I welcome new members of the BCC, Michael Pisasale and Anthony Sharley, and recognise the contributions of both retiring and reappointed members of the committee.

I extend my sincere thanks to our partners in government, and the many stakeholders and community members who contribute to the shared stewardship of the Murray-Darling Basin. I particularly want to thank the people of the MDBA. Their commitment to our purpose and to the Basin often goes without recognition. The heart of the Basin comes from the souls who serve it and none more so than the team I have the privilege to serve with.

As we look ahead, the MDBA remains committed to leading with purpose—to bringing energy, to being in community and to being courageous—so that the rivers, wetlands, and communities of the Basin thrive for generations to come. The year ahead will be pivotal as we continue Basin Plan implementation while shaping it for the future and continuing to drive improvements in how we run our rivers.



**Andrew McConville**  
Chief Executive

# The Murray–Darling Basin is Australia's largest and most complex river system

- Spans 4 states and 1 territory
- Covers an area of more than a million square kilometres
- 22 catchments
- Home to 2.4 million people



The Basin supports 8,400 irrigated agriculture businesses.



Farmers use water to produce the crops that feed Australians and help our economy.



Agriculture in the Basin contributed \$30 billion to Australia's economy.



Swimming, fishing, boating and other recreational water activities are only possible in clean, safe water.



First Nations people's connection to Country relies on water to maintain traditional practices.



The plants and animals that live in the Basin's unique ecosystem depend on water to survive.



Towns and rural communities rely on a healthy river system.



More than 100 ecological sites of international and national significance.

Figure 2 Why the Murray–Darling Basin is important

# About the Murray–Darling Basin

The Murray–Darling Basin in south-eastern Australia is an extensive system of interconnected rivers and lakes providing significant environmental, cultural and economic value.

There are 23 rivers in the Basin. The two main rivers are the River Murray and the Darling (Baaka) River. The Darling (Baaka) River begins in southern Queensland, where the Culgoa and Barwon Rivers meet. It flows into the River Murray at the border of New South Wales and Victoria and eventually reaches the sea just to the south-east of Adelaide.

The Basin includes most of New South Wales, some of southern Queensland, the east of South Australia, northern Victoria and all of the Australian Capital Territory.

*The Murray–Darling Basin is called a 'basin' because it's a catchment area where water collects and drains – in this case into the Murray and Darling (Baaka) Rivers and eventually out into the Southern Ocean.*

Figure 2 shows some of the many reasons why the Murray–Darling Basin is important.

The water that flows through the Murray–Darling Basin sustains plants and animals, communities, and industries such as agriculture and tourism. Water is central to First Nations people's ongoing connection to Country, Culture and each other, with the people of more than 50 Nations caring for Country across the Basin.

Water from the rivers of the Basin has transformed dry land into productive farmlands that contribute \$30 billion to the Australian economy every year.

The rivers, lakes and dams in the Basin provide water for living and drinking to the 2.4 million people living in the Basin, as well as more than 1.3 million people in Adelaide.

The Basin's rivers support unique Australian habitats, including 16 internationally recognised and protected wetlands. These environments are critical to the survival of more than 120 waterbird species and more than 50 native fish species.

Food grown in the Basin feeds Australia and the world. Forty per cent of all Australian farms are in the Basin, including some 8,400 irrigated agriculture businesses.

With much of our food and fibre exported overseas, agriculture in the Basin contributes significantly to Australia's economy.

When there is not enough water, the health of the whole system suffers. When water levels fall, water quality also deteriorates. Salt and acid come into the water from the soil, making water unsafe for drinking, swimming and farming as well as unhealthy for plants and animals.

Basin waters give life to plants, animals, and fish including 120 species of native and migratory birds and more than 50 species of native fish. The unique natural environments of the Basin are highly valued. Over 100 sites are registered as nationally important, and some are recognised as internationally important under the Ramsar Convention. High value icon sites along the River Murray are cared for under The Living Murray program because of their ecological and cultural significance.

The Basin also supports a thriving tourist industry worth \$11 billion annually, which contributes significantly to sustaining local communities.

Find out more about the Murray–Darling Basin and why it is important on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/basin) [mdba.gov.au/basin].

## The Murray–Darling Basin Plan

Multiple demands on Basin water for communities, agriculture and other industries made a water sharing agreement necessary. It is a shared resource, so it is a shared responsibility to achieve a sustainably healthy river system for current and future generations.

The Murray–Darling Basin Plan (the Basin Plan) was legislated in 2012 to ensure a coordinated approach to water management across the Basin states of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. There are 6 key elements to the Basin Plan, as shown in Figure 3. At its heart, the Basin Plan sets the amount of water that can be taken each year, managed through local water plans and water resource plans (WRPs).

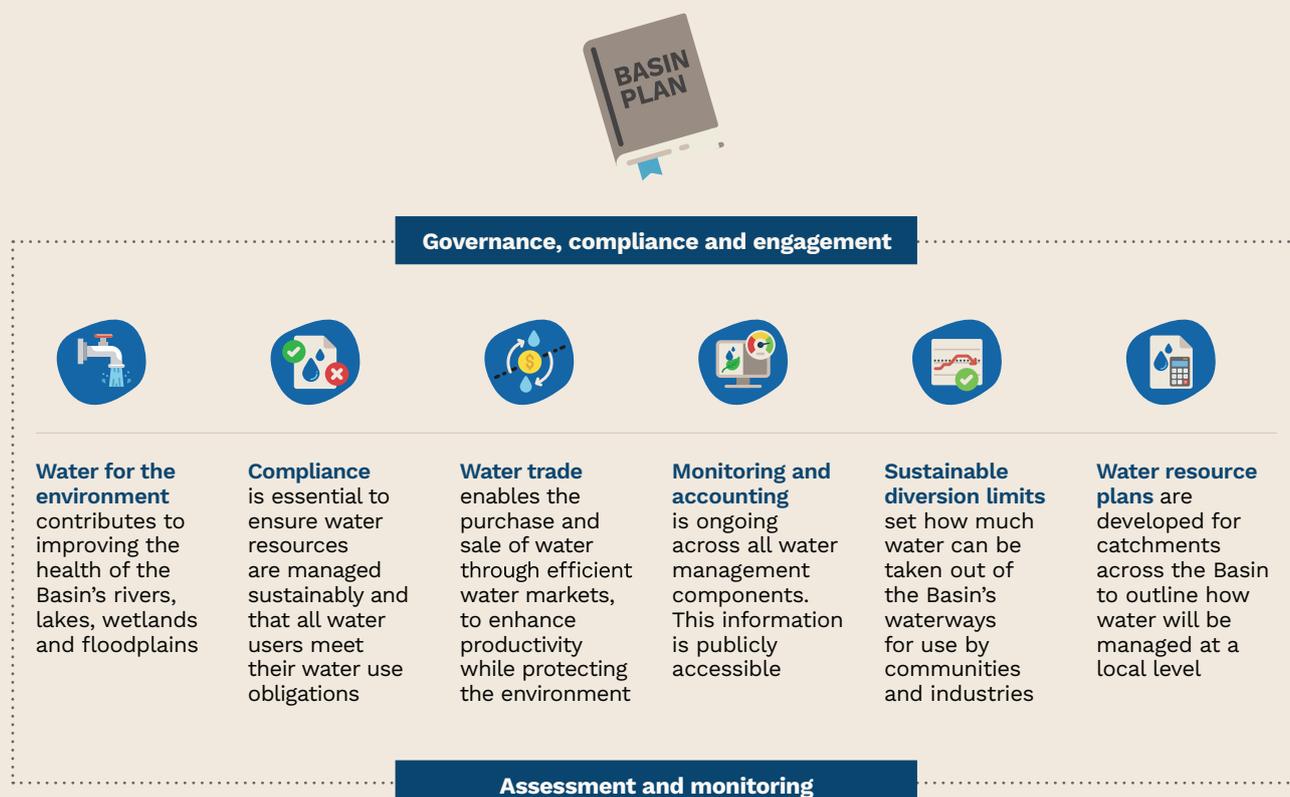
To implement the Basin Plan, the MDBA works with a range of Australian Government and state government partners, as well as with industry, environmental, community and First Nations peoples.

The aim of the Basin Plan is to restore the health of the Basin and ensure that water resources are shared sustainably for all purposes, including the environment.

Under the original legislation, most elements of the Basin Plan were to be implemented by the end of 2024. However, the *Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Act 2023* has provided more time to meet the remaining water recovery targets and has also extended the timeframe for implementing the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM).

More information about the Basin Plan can be found on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/water-management/basin-plan) [mdba.gov.au/water-management/basin-plan].

Figure 3 Key elements of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan



## Basin Plan Review

The MDBA is currently conducting a review of the Basin Plan, due for completion by late 2026. The review provides an opportunity to review the settings of the Basin Plan in light of the 2025 Basin Plan Evaluation and decide whether any changes are needed to ensure our rivers remain sustainable over coming years. The timeline for the Basin Plan Review is shown in Figure 4.

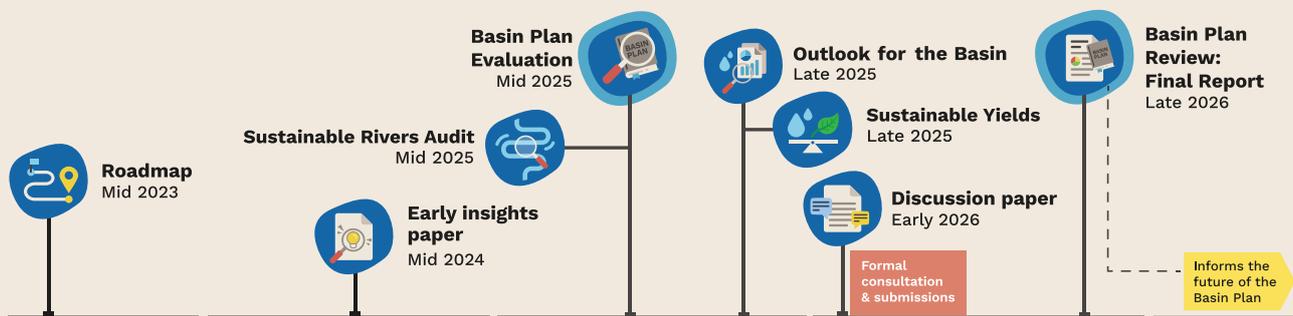
The Review will bring insights and information from consultations across the Basin together with data that are advancing our understanding of Basin dynamics. This includes the MD-WERP, a 4-year Australian Government initiative launched in 2021 to strengthen scientific knowledge of the Murray–Darling Basin [[mdba.gov.au/science-and-knowledge](https://mdba.gov.au/science-and-knowledge)].

The research produced through this program provides a vital line of evidence to support policy development and inform decision-making.

The Review will be the MDBA’s vehicle for delivering advice to government on the settings of the Basin Plan for the years ahead to ensure the Basin Plan is robust, evidence-based and sustainable.

More information about the Basin Plan Review can be found on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/water-management/basin-plan/2026-basin-plan-review) [[mdba.gov.au/water-management/basin-plan/2026-basin-plan-review](https://mdba.gov.au/water-management/basin-plan/2026-basin-plan-review)].

Figure 4 Basin Plan review timeline to 2026





# About the Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## The Agency

The MDBA is an independent government agency, established under the *Water Act 2007* (the Water Act). The Water Act sets out the role of the MDBA in implementing the Basin Plan and performing functions under the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement (the Agreement) (Schedule 1 of the Water Act), including operating the River Murray on behalf of the Basin governments. In partnership with Basin governments, industries and communities we manage the Murray–Darling Basin’s water resources in the national interest.

We use a whole-of-Basin approach to ensure all social, economic, environmental and cultural perspectives are considered as we protect our **Rivers, for generations**.

Our most important work is to:

- Prepare, implement and review an integrated plan for the sustainable use of the Basin’s water resources.
- Operate the River Murray system and efficiently deliver water to users on behalf of partner governments.
- Measure, monitor and record the quality and quantity of the Basin’s water resources.
- Support, encourage and conduct research and investigations about the Basin’s water resources and dependent ecosystems.
- Advise the Australian Government Minister for Water on the accreditation of state WRPs.
- Provide water rights information to facilitate water trading across the Basin.
- Engage and educate the Australian community about the Basin’s water resources.

## Portfolio and minister

The MDBA is a portfolio agency of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), reporting to Senator the Hon Murray Watt, the Minister for the Environment and Water.



## Our purpose

*Rivers, for generations*



## Our role

In partnership with Basin governments, industries and communities we manage the Murray–Darling Basin’s water resources in the national interest.

We develop, implement, and review the Basin Plan, advancing the sustainability, productivity, wellbeing and resilience of the Basin’s river systems, its people and places.

The Water Act sets out our role in developing and implementing the Basin Plan and performing functions under the Agreement.

We deliver our functions under the Agreement with and on behalf of the contracting governments – the Australian Government and the governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory (Basin governments).

The Agreement establishes the MDBA’s function to direct river operations within the River Murray system. The Objectives and Outcomes (O&O) for River Operations in the River Murray system, approved by the Basin Officials Committee (BOC), are based around 5 themes:

1. water storage, delivery, and accounting
2. River Murray operations (RMO) and assets
3. people and communities
4. environment
5. information and communication.

Our essential roles are to:

- provide expertise and knowledge on complex water matters
- drive and facilitate transparent science and analysis
- manage and modernise the River Murray system
- build relationships and communicate authentically to foster a shared understanding of Basin values and perspectives
- meet our responsibilities under the Agreement, the Water Act, and the Basin Plan.

### Key Activities

Two key activities have been set for the MDBA. These are to:

#### 1. Drive the successful implementation of the Basin Plan

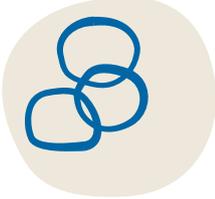
##### Objectives

- Fully implement the Basin Plan
- Review and refine the Basin Plan to be fit for purpose.

#### 2. Efficiently and effectively operate the River Murray system for partner governments

##### Objectives

- Run the River Murray system
- Reform and optimise management of the River Murray system.



## Our values

Our values and principles underpin everything we do. We uphold the Australian Public Service (APS) Values of stewardship, being impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful and ethical. Because of our unique context, we are also guided by our MDBA values, as shown in Figure 5.

Our values express how we are when at our best and most purposeful—representing the best of us and how we aspire to be.

*Our success across the year reflects the collective dedication and collaborative spirit of everyone. Together, through collaboration, innovation, and shared stewardship, we will continue our journey towards a healthier and more resilient Basin.*

Figure 5 MDBA values



Being in **COMMUNITY**

**Understanding, listening, connecting, strengthening and sustaining relationships.**

‘Being in Community’ is about more than physical location – it is how we are when all feel recognised, valued, seen and heard. It is something we seek with First Nations, government, each other and the many diverse and unique Basin communities with whom we interact.

It is about trust, openness and empathy, encouraging and giving voice to diverse views and perspectives. Being ‘in Community’ is critical for creativity and collaboration.



Being **COURAGEOUS**

**Speaking up, articulating what we do, standing up for our beliefs, voicing concerns and taking ownership.**

‘Being Courageous’ allows us to explore and push boundaries, face into trade-offs and make bold choices and decisions. It helps us take risks, seek and give open and honest feedback without fear of failure or of being judged.

Accepting we won’t always get it right and being confident in our purpose, courage helps us clearly communicate our ideas and scientific insights without regard to popularity.



Bringing **ENERGY**

**Strengthening, focusing, empowering and enlivening us to develop and learn new and ever more effective methods, skills and approaches to our work.**

‘Bringing Energy’ is critical to what we do day to day. It helps us navigate challenges and channel insight and ideas where they are needed most. It motivates us and animates our thinking. It elevates curiosity and innovation, fuels our ambition and sustains performance and momentum... whilst simultaneously promoting fulfilment, vitality and joy.

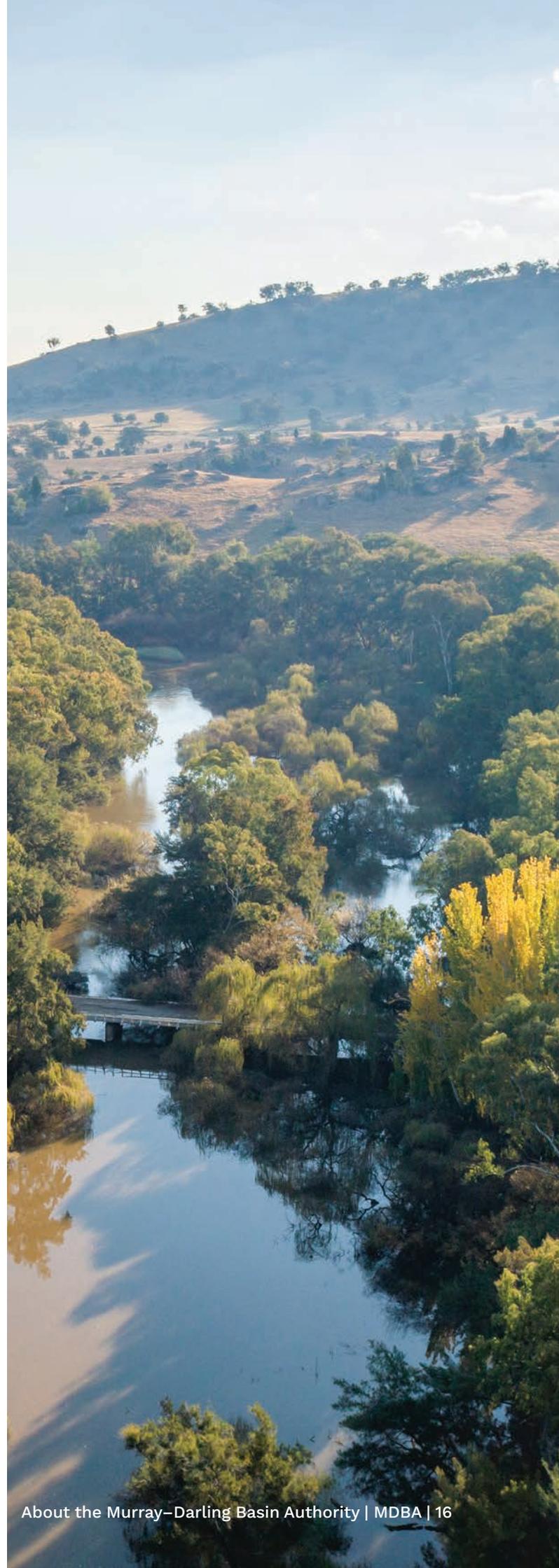


## Our ambition

Our ambition describes how we want to be bringing our purpose to life. It gives ***Rivers, for generations*** tangible scale, depth and form.

It challenges and pushes us to strive towards a set of specific outcomes that demonstrate:

- **A resilient Basin** flowing and functioning through the extremes of Australia's evolving climate.
- **First Nations perspectives** in decision making delivering Cultural water.
- **A powerful and continually growing body of knowledge** underpinning sound policy and decision making.
- **Collaborative relationships and integration** at the federal level, between states and communities delivering across borders.
- **Confident, optimistic communities** who feel heard and understand what's needed for a sustainable river where 'every drop counts'.
- **Water security** for towns and communities, and certainty for industry.
- **Healthy, sustainable environments** where plants, birds, fish and other animals thrive.
- **A workplace so known for positivity, diversity, flexibility, value and respect** that it inspires others to join us and our cause.





# Part 2

## Performance

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# Introductory statement

I, as the Accountable Authority of the Murray–Darling Basin Authority, present the 2024–25 annual performance statement as required under the Commonwealth *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) (paragraph 39(1)(a)).

In my opinion, this annual performance statement is based on properly maintained records, accurately reflects the performance of the entity, and complies with the PGPA Act (subsection 39(2)).



**Jacqui Hickey,**  
A/g Chief Executive

24 September 2025

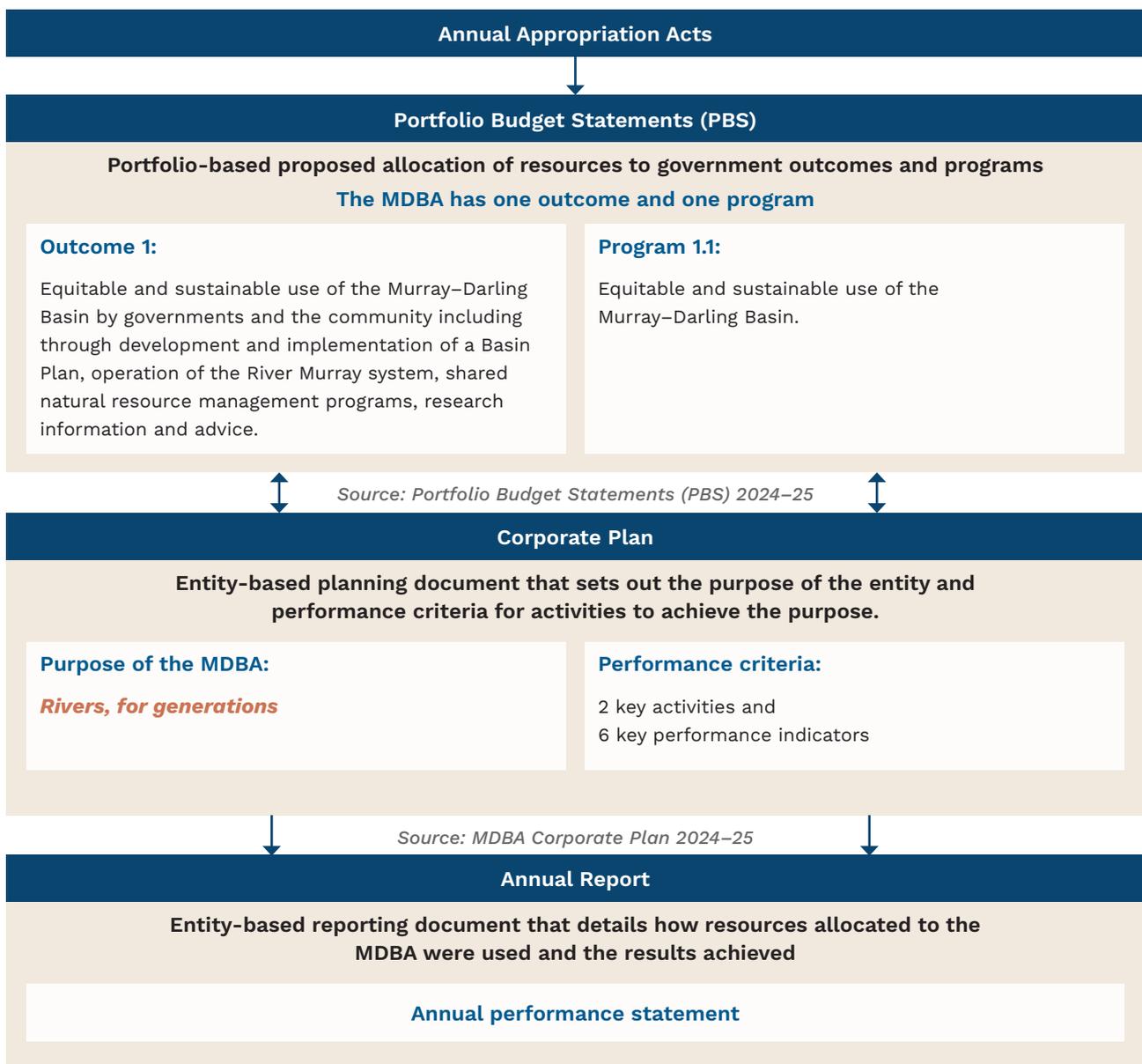
# Reporting approach

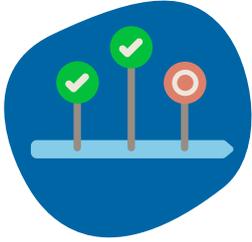
The MDBA, as a corporate Commonwealth entity, follows the PGPA Act requirements for planning and reporting.

Figure 6 shows the links between the annual Australian Government Appropriation Acts and budget statements, the corporate plan and the annual report for 2024–25.

The MDBA manages its performance against a single outcome through one program.

**Figure 6** The MDBA performance framework, 2024–25





## 6 KPIs and 16 measures assessed the MDBA's performance in 2024–25.

Each key activity has key performance indicators (KPIs) with measures and targets to assess whether the goal has been met. Figure 7 shows the KPIs for 2024–25.

It also indicates the types of measures used, including the short, medium, or long-term timeframes for each output, whether the measures are qualitative or quantitative, and the nature of the improvement or output they are intended to produce.

Performance is then reported against the annual targets for all measures in the following pages.



Figure 7 Overview of MDBA performance measures for 2024–25

MDBA's purpose: <i>Rivers, for generations</i>		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Output	Qualitative	Quantitative	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term		
<b>MDBA's ambition:</b> Bringing together what's needed in water management to help achieve a healthy working Basin for the benefit of generations of Australians											
MDBA's key activities	Key performance indicators	Measures and measure type									
<b>Key activity 1</b> Drive the successful implementation of the Basin Plan  <b>Objectives</b> Fully implement the Basin Plan. Review and refine the Basin Plan.	<b>KPI 1</b> The Basin Plan is operational and adaptive to changing conditions	1.1	Timely assessment of submitted WRPs	•			•	•	•		
		1.2	Information from SDL accounting is used to inform decision-making	•		•		•		•	
	<b>KPI 2</b> Use the best available environmental, social, cultural and economic considerations to report on the Basin Plan and make robust and defensible decisions	1.3	Effective planning for environmental water use	•		•		•		•	
		2.1	The MDBA reports on the effectiveness of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan	•		•				•	
	<b>KPI 3</b> Improve transparency and ensure stakeholders are aware of and understand the MDBA's role	2.2	Implement a robust, best practice Science Quality Assurance framework			•	•	•		•	
		3.1	Awareness and understanding of the MDBA's role based on market research (conducted every three years)	•			•			•	
	<b>KPI 4</b> Deliver the Basin Plan Review	3.2	The MDBA delivers communication, engagement and media activities which improve stakeholder awareness and understanding of the MDBA's role	•			•			•	
		4.1	Deliver the Basin Plan Review			•		•		•	
	<b>Key activity 2</b> Efficiently and effectively operate the River Murray system for Basin governments  <b>Objectives</b> Run the River Murray system. Reform and optimise management for the River Murray system.	<b>KPI 5</b> Operate the River Murray system in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement	5.1	Coordinate and oversee the asset activities as agreed and approved by the Ministerial Council in the Annual Work Plan			•	•		•	•
			5.2	Number of adverse rulings from jurisdictional dam safety regulators	•				•	•	
5.3			Number of unscheduled major outages of assets		•				•		•
5.4			Fulfil efficiency obligations under the 'Objectives and Outcomes' as independently assessed		•			•		•	
<b>KPI 6</b> Maintain and improve the health of the River Murray system (and the Basin where relevant) in accordance with the Agreement and associated agreements		5.5	Fulfil effectiveness obligations under the 'Objectives and Outcomes' as independently assessed	•			•		•		
		6.1	Maintain or improve the environmental health of the 7 key sites of the River Murray system	•				•		•	
		6.2	The Basin salinity target, as identified in schedule B of the Agreement, is achieved	•				•		•	
		6.3	Timely monitoring and reporting on water quality in the River Murray system to aid in decision-making		•		•		•		•
						•			•		•

# Summary of performance

Table 1 shows a summary of overall performance against the strategic goals, KPIs and measures set in the 2024–25 Corporate Plan.

Details of measures and an analysis of performance are presented for each target below the table.

**Table 1** Summary of performance against KPIs 2024–25

KPI	Measure	Result against target
<b>Key activity 1</b> Drive the successful implementation of the Basin Plan	<b>KPI 1:</b> The Basin Plan is operational and adaptive to changing conditions	Met
	<b>KPI 2:</b> Use the best available environmental, social, cultural and economic considerations to report on the Basin Plan and make robust and defensible decisions	Met
	<b>KPI 3:</b> Improve transparency and ensure stakeholders are aware of and understand the MDBA's role	Met
	<b>KPI 4:</b> Deliver the Basin Plan Review	Met
<b>Key activity 2</b> Efficiently and effectively operate the River Murray system for partner governments	<b>KPI 5:</b> Operate the River Murray System in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement	Met
	<b>KPI 6:</b> Maintain and improve the health of the River Murray system (and the Basin where relevant) in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement and associated agreements	Met

# Key activity 1

## Drive the successful implementation of the Basin Plan

The objective of the Basin Plan is to increase the health of the Basin through balancing the use and benefit to all water users.

### Role of the MDBA

The MDBA's role is to lead the implementation of the Basin Plan in collaboration with Basin state and territory governments and other Australian government agencies.

### Objectives

- Fully implement the Basin Plan.
- Review and refine the Basin Plan to be fit for purpose.

### Actions

- Assess WRPs for consistency with the Basin Plan for accreditation including enabling amendments to accredited WRPs.
- Publish the annual sustainable diversion limits (SDL) accounts.
- Develop annual watering priorities.
- Undertake assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the Basin Plan.
- Conduct quality research to inform Basin water resource management.
- Undertake the 2026 Basin Plan Review.
- Deliver a Constraints Relaxation Implementation Roadmap.
- Continue the 4-year program to integrate Murray–Darling Basin river modelling.

### Expected impact

- Accreditation of WRPs which are consistent with the Basin Plan.
- WRPs evolve and adapt to new information. WRPs are reaccredited to reflect improvements.
- Improved Murray–Darling Basin water resources accounting and reporting.
- Water use across the Basin is reported transparently to enable assessment of compliance with SDLs.
- Effective use of environmental water.
- Effectiveness of the Basin Plan is known and understood.
- Evidence-based policy and decision making founded on robust and defensible data, information and knowledge.

### Performance and analysis

The following pages show progress against targets for the 4 KPIs of key activity 1:

**KPI 1:** The Basin Plan is operational and adaptive to changing conditions.

**KPI 2:** Use the best available environmental, social, cultural and economic considerations to report on the Basin Plan and make robust and defensible decisions.

**KPI 3:** Improve transparency and ensure stakeholders are aware of and understand the Basin Plan, and the MDBA's role.

**KPI 4:** Deliver the Basin Plan Review.

## Performance on KPI 1: The Basin Plan is operational and adaptive to changing conditions

KPI 1 supports the objective of the Basin Plan by providing a way of equitably sharing Basin water resources through accredited WRPs and SDL accounting.

The 3 measures in KPI 1 are key to achieving the objectives of the Basin Plan. They aim to achieve 3 actions:

- Assess water WRPs for consistency with the Basin Plan for accreditation, including enabling amendments to accredited WRPs.
- Publish the annual SDL accounts.
- Develop annual watering priorities.

### How water use in the Basin is regulated

The Murray–Darling Basin is an interconnected system of rivers made up of 22 different catchments.

The Basin Plan sets SDLs on how much water can be taken in each Basin catchment—**the permitted take**. These are long-term annual average limits on consumptive use that ensure there is enough water for a healthy River Murray system.

Each catchment also has a WRP that sets out how much water can be taken annually in a way that meets the long-term SDL—**the annual actual take**.

We calculate the difference between the permitted take and the actual take every year, and the difference between the two is added to the **Register of Take**. When annual actual take is less than annual permitted take, a credit is

registered. When annual actual take is more than annual permitted take, a debit is registered for the catchment.

This mechanism allows an assessment of SDL compliance.

In addition to measures of WRPs and SDL accounting, KPI 1 also measures planning for environmental water use. This ensures that Basin-wide environmental watering priorities are set each year, to achieve the Basin Plan’s long-term goals for native vegetation, waterbirds, native fish, and river flows and connectivity. These are developed in collaboration with First Nations peoples to ensure their values and uses are considered.

**Table 2** Performance against targets for Key activity 1, KPI 1

KPI	Measure	2024–25 Target	Result
<b>KPI 1: The Basin Plan is operational and adaptive to changing conditions</b>	1.1 Timely assessment of submitted water resource plans	Assessment conducted in 13 weeks for submitted plans	Not applicable – no WRPs submitted for assessment in the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
	1.2 Information from SDL accounting is used to inform decision making	Inspector-General of Water Compliance (IGWC) uses SDL accounting information to inform decisions relating to compliance	Met
	1.3 Effective planning for environmental water use	Delivery of Basin annual environmental water priorities	Met

## Measure 1.1 Timely assessment of submitted Water Resource Plan (WRP)

### About the measure:

Measure 1.1 aligns to the intended impact of the action of assessing WRPs for consistency with the Basin Plan for accreditation including enabling amendments to accredited WRPs.

WRPs are a key part of implementing the Basin Plan. Ensuring that WRPs are accredited is important because they provide a consistent, Basin-wide and transparent approach to state water planning and management. Subject to states preparing and submitting WRPs for accreditation to the MDBA, this measure helps quantify the effectiveness of implementation of the Basin Plan.

### 2024–25 Target:

Assessment conducted in 13 weeks for submitted plans.

### How the measure is assessed:

Achievement is based on the proportion of WRPs that are assessed by MDBA within 13 weeks of submission.

### Result:

No WRPs were lodged for assessment in 2024–25.

All 13 plans for Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory have been assessed and are accredited and operational. As at 30 June 2025, 16 of 20 New South Wales plans have been assessed and are accredited.

The MDBA has worked with New South Wales in the WRP ‘assist phase’ to ensure the remaining WRPs, when submitted, are best placed to be assessed as meeting Basin Plan requirements. On submission of each WRP, the MDBA will apply standard operating procedures to ensure assessment within the target 13-week timeframe wherever possible.

A list of Basin state WRPs, and the status of each, is available on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/water-management/basin-plan/water-resource-plans/list-state-water-resource-plans) [mdba.gov.au/water-management/basin-plan/water-resource-plans/list-state-water-resource-plans].

## Measure 1.2 Information from SDL accounting is used to inform decision making

### About the measure:

A Register of Take for each SDL resource unit (catchment) provides the information that determines compliance with the SDLs. Registers of Take are prepared by the MDBA using data provided by Basin states.

Reporting the Registers of Take in a timely and transparent manner allows the relevant state and the IGWC to agree actions and measures to be taken, if required, to bring use back to the SDL, providing Basin-wide benefits.

The Water Take Report is published each year to enhance transparency and provide additional information about water use across the Basin and inform future decision-making and policy change.

Measure 1.2 demonstrates that the Basin Plan outcome of reducing consumptive use in the Basin to the SDL is being met. This performance measure has been changed to recognise the change in the MDBA’s role in regard to SDL accounting and compliance, following the creation of the IGWC.

### 2024–25 Target:

IGWC uses SDL accounting information to inform decisions relating to compliance.

### How the measure is assessed:

Registers of Take and the Annual Water Take Reports are published on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/sustainable-diversion-limit-reporting-2022-23) [mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/sustainable-diversion-limit-reporting-2022-23] as set out in the Basin Plan, each year.

SDL Water Take Reports include information on water use, including held environmental water and Cap compliance (subject to a change in the requirement to do so in the legislation).

### Result:

The 2024–25 target has been met.

The MDBA provided the 2023–24 Registers of Take to the IGWC in May 2025. Publication of the Registers of Take report will be coordinated with the IGWC Compliance Statement by early August 2025.

## Measure 1.3 Effective planning for environmental water use

### About the measure:

Measure 1.3 aligns to the intended impact of the key action 'effective use of environmental water'. Annual environmental watering priorities for the Basin identify where water for the environment can be best used across the Basin each year, providing a Basin view of where the environment needs the most help.

Water for the environment is river water specifically set aside by Basin governments to restore, maintain and improve the ecological health of rivers, floodplains and wetlands.

The Basin-wide environmental watering strategy is the long-term watering plan for the Basin. It sets out the improvements that we expect to see for river flows and connectivity, native vegetation, waterbirds and native fish with the water being recovered for the Basin environment.

More information about the strategy can be found on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/basin-wide-environmental-watering-strategy) [mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/basin-wide-environmental-watering-strategy].

### 2024–25 Target:

Delivery of Basin annual environmental water priorities.

### How the measure is assessed:

This measure is achieved by publication of the Basin annual environmental watering priorities on the MDBA website by 30 June each year. Division 5 of Chapter 8 of the Basin Plan (Basin annual environmental watering priorities) outlines how the watering priorities are to be prepared.

The MDBA has published these priorities by 30 June each year since 2013, for the upcoming year. The Basin Annual Environmental Watering Priorities 2024–25 were published in June 2024.

More information about the Basin annual environmental watering priorities can be found on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications-basin-annual-environmental-watering-priorities) [mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications-basin-annual-environmental-watering-priorities].

The Authority prepares the priorities in consultation with the Basin states and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH). Consultation happens by providing the draft priorities to the Environmental Watering Committee, the Northern Basin Environmental Working Group and the Southern Connected Basin Environmental Watering Committee.

### Result:

The 2024–25 target has been met.

Using best available science and through collaboration with key stakeholders, the prioritisation process was completed on 27 June 2025.

More information about the report can be found on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/basin-annual-environmental-watering-priorities) [mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/basin-annual-environmental-watering-priorities].

## Performance on KPI 2:

### Use the best available environmental, social, cultural and economic considerations to report on the Basin Plan and make robust and defensible decisions

KPI 2 supports the successful implementation of the Basin Plan by providing a system for reporting on the effectiveness of the Plan and a quality assurance framework to support decision-making about managing Basin water resources.

The KPI has 2 performance measures which together support the actions:

- Undertake assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the Basin Plan.
- Conduct quality research to inform Basin water resource management.

**Table 3** Performance against targets for Key activity 1, KPI 2

KPI	Measure	2024–25 Target	Result
<b>KPI 2: Use the best available environmental, social, cultural and economic considerations to report on the Basin Plan and make robust and defensible decisions</b>	2.1 The MDBA reports on the effectiveness of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan	Basin Plan Annual Report published	Met
	2.2 Implement a robust, best practice Science Quality Assurance framework	Framework is used and embedded across the agency	Met

## Measure 2.1 The MDBA reports on the effectiveness of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan

### About the measure:

The MDBA is responsible for reporting on the effectiveness of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan.

KPI 2 ensures that there is a framework and associated reporting in place to support effective decision making regarding the Basin Plan. The Basin Plan annual reports help to focus priorities, acknowledge achievements and identify problems, as well as build trust and confidence in the community about the Basin Plan reforms.

### 2024–25 Target:

Basin Plan annual report published.

### How the measure is assessed:

Section 52A of the *Water Act 2007* (Cth) requires the MDBA to provide a report to the minister on the effectiveness of the Basin Plan within 6 months after the end of each financial year.

Once the minister has received the report it must be tabled in each of the houses of Parliament within 15 sitting days. It is then published on the MDBA website.

### Result:

The 2024–25 target has been met.

The Basin Plan annual report 2023–24 was tabled in both Houses of Parliament on 12 February 2025 and published on the MDBA website on 14 February 2025.

The Basin Plan annual report 2023–24 can be found on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/basin-plan-annual-report-2023-24) [mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/basin-plan-annual-report-2023-24].

*Performance measure 2.1 was not classified under the ‘effectiveness’ criterion in the 2024–25 Corporate Plan. For the purposes of the 2024–25 Annual Report, the measure has been reported against ‘effectiveness’, as it more appropriately reflects the extent to which the program of work achieved its intended purpose.*

## Measure 2.2 Implement a robust, best practice the Science Quality Assurance framework

### About the measure:

Measure 2.2 aligns to the expected impact of the key action to conduct quality research to inform Basin water resource management.

### 2024–25 Target:

Framework is implemented across the agency.

### How the measure is assessed:

For 2024–25 the assessment considers the extent to which:

- Consistent, robust and best practice quality assurance measures are implemented by science users in the MDBA, and science users are following the recommendations from the guidelines.
- The purpose, impact and outcomes of the guidelines are communicated to science users in the MDBA.

- The Science Quality Assurance Guidelines will be published on the MDBA website to publicly demonstrate MDBA’s best practice approach to quality assurance.

### Result:

The 2024–25 target has been met.

The Science Quality Assurance Guidelines are available internally and embedded in MDBA’s project management framework. The Guidelines have informed the development of a public facing description of MDBA’s approach to science and knowledge.

The MDBA Science and Knowledge Approach paper has been endorsed by the Authority and is to be published early in the 2025–26 financial year.

### Performance on KPI 3:

## Improve transparency and ensure stakeholders are aware of and understand the Basin Plan, and the MDBA's role

KPI 3 aims to build understanding and awareness of key MDBA actions, including assessing WRPs publishing SDL accounts, developing annual watering priorities and overseeing asset management.

Improved transparency and confidence in the Basin Plan, RMO and the MDBA is critical to achieving a healthy, working, Basin. Transparency allows all governments, communities and industries to access the legislative settings and key documents that govern the Basin's water resources. In turn, stakeholders can understand the rules and regulations that protect and share the water resources, resulting in confidence in the Basin Plan and the MDBA's activities.

**Table 4** Performance against targets for Key activity 1, KPI 3

KPI	Measure	2024–25 Target	Result
<b>KPI 3: Improve transparency and ensure stakeholders are aware of and understand the Basin Plan, and the MDBA's role</b>	3.1 Awareness and understanding of the MDBA's role based on market research (conducted every 3 years)	5% increase on 2020 results, which found 60% awareness	Met
	3.2 The MDBA delivers communication, engagement and media activities which improve stakeholder awareness and understanding of MDBA's role	Case study: MDBA transparency, communications and engagement activities	Met

## Measure 3.1 Awareness and understanding of the MDBA's role based on market research (conducted every 3 years)

### About the measure:

Measure 3.1 demonstrates how effective MDBA is in raising increased awareness and understanding of the Basin Plan and RMO and the MDBA's role.

### 2024–25 Target:

5% increase on 2020 results, which found 60% awareness.

### How the measure is assessed:

Measure 3.1 relies on the MDBA market research that is conducted consistent with international quality standards by an independent provider every 3 years. This research is complemented by evaluation of communications and engagement activities to increase awareness and understanding of the Basin Plan and RMO and the MDBA's role.

### Result:

In 2024 market research was conducted to measure awareness and understanding of the Basin Plan and gauge community interest in the effectiveness of MDBA communications.

When compared to the results in 2020 the 2024 findings showed a 13.33% increase in community awareness of the MDBA (now 68%) and an 11% increase in water license holders' awareness of the organisation now (94%).



## Measure 3.2 The MDBA delivers communication, engagement and media activities which improve stakeholder awareness and understanding of the MDBA's role

### About the measure:

Measure 3.2 aligns to the transparency, awareness and understanding of the following actions:

- Assess WRPs for consistency with the Basin Plan for accreditation including enabling amendments to accredited WRPs.
- Publish the annual SDL accounts.
- Develop annual watering priorities.
- Undertake assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the Basin Plan.
- Manage and deliver Basin government water shares in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement.
- Maintain and improve the health of the River Murray system (and the Basin where relevant) in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement and associated agreements.

### 2024–25 Target:

Case study: MDBA transparency, communications and engagement activities.

### How the measure is assessed:

The MDBA transparency, communications and engagement activities case study will seek to measure the accessibility and understanding of the Basin Plan, RMO and the MDBA's role through its key communication and engagement activities including:

- Sir Angus Houston's Listening Tours, regional community forums and the BCC.
- River reflections annual regional water conference.
- Increase in unique visitors to MDBA website, including the digital newsroom and electronic newsletter River Reach.
- Reach of traditional media coverage.
- Growth and engagement in social media channels including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter.
- Other stakeholder engagement activities including webinars, regional engagement activities and regular meetings with the BCC and peak organisations.

### Result:

The 2024–25 target has been met, with this case study showing the extent of our communication and engagement activities during the 2024–25 financial year.

A summary of key areas of activity and outcomes are shown in Figure 8.

**Figure 8** MDBA transparency, engagement, communication and media activities, 2024–25



## Communication and engagement case study

### Working with Basin states

In 2024, our work to develop and deliver the Constraints Relaxation Implementation Roadmap (the Roadmap) demonstrated our commitment to engage and involve jurisdictions through a well-planned process that kept officials and potentially impacted landholders and communities informed.

The Roadmap was developed in close consultation with the New South Wales, Victorian, and South Australian governments as well as with the Commonwealth. It was developed in response to diverse stakeholder perspectives and community aspirations for a successful program. Our combined engagement approach with the States made use of existing forums, networks and channels, which were complemented by tailored engagement including on-site visits and closed meetings with landholders.

An inter-jurisdictional advisory group was formed to guide and inform the development of the Roadmap, enabling enhanced collaboration and coordination.

Building on the body of knowledge and engagement already undertaken through years of planning and implementing constraints projects, the MDBA undertook targeted consultation to test and refine the Roadmap as it was developed. The MDBA consultation focused on listening to those involved in past

constraints projects, those with concerns about the existing processes, and those with hopes for reform. This included meetings with peak organisations, councils, community members, First Nations peoples and jurisdictions. To ensure broad coverage the MDBA also accepted submissions via the website.

Thanks to the valued input of Basin states and all those who provided their time and feedback in 2023, the MDBA released the Roadmap in December 2024.

The Roadmap provides for a common approach across Basin jurisdictions to relax constraints while managing the impacts to community. It guides governments in delivering projects that will maximise outcomes and value from environmental water that has been recovered. Like the engagement that has developed the Roadmap, its content sets a clear and collaborative pathway for Basin governments to navigate the complex reforms required to relax constraints and calls for the voices of those most affected, including landholders and First Nations people, to be at the heart of project design and delivery.

The full Roadmap can be found on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/constraints-relaxation-implementation-roadmap) [mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/constraints-relaxation-implementation-roadmap].

### Engaging internationally

MDBA expertise continued to be sought by organisations around the world.

In October 2024, Chief Executive Andrew McConville attended the 10th triennial Congress of the International Network of Basin Organisations (INBO) in France. The INBO is a non-profit association under French law, created in 1994 and based in Paris. It has 192 Members from 88 countries, organised into Regional networks to encourage exchanges based on specific geographical contexts.

The Chief Executive spoke on the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and its role in supporting the achievement of water and environmental policy outcomes, as well as outlining how the Basin Plan and our River operations provide quantitative tools for the management of water scarcity.

In January 2025, Scott Ashby, Executive Director of Basin Science and Knowledge and Joel Bailey, General Manager of Applied Science, visited the Mekong River Commission (MRC) headquarters in Vientiane, Laos and the MRC's Regional Drought and Flood Centre in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

This was the first opportunity in several years for the MDBA to reconnect with the MRC under our Memorandum of Understanding that was established in 2019. We learned how the MRC is working to improve their flood and drought forecasting and water use and monitoring capabilities and have held follow-up discussions in areas of mutual interest.

The MDBA also hosted a number of international delegations, including senior leaders from Mekong nations and a group from the World Bank. Working in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the DCCEEW the MDBA hosted or presented to 7 international delegations during the year.

The Executive Director, Basin Plan represented the MDBA as part of the Australian Delegation to the World Water Forum in Bali in May 2024. The Australian presence was well received by participants and exemplified the MDBA's commitment to being an active global water citizen.

## Partnering with First Nations people

We have continued our commitment to engage with First Nations people, groups and representative bodies. During 2024–25 this included engagement with the BCC Indigenous Water Subcommittee, the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) and directly with First Nations from across the Basin.

During the year, MLDRIN supported key environmental watering activities, including participating in the Southern Connected Basin Environmental Watering Committee as advisors and they were commissioned to inform the Basin-wide Environmental Watering Strategy to strengthen opportunities for First Nations involvement in environmental water management. The Northern Basin Environmental Watering Group (NBEWG) includes the opportunity for membership for up to 2 First Nations People in an advisory role.

To provide a First Nations perspective to the Sustainable Rivers Audit and Murray–Darling Basin Outlook project, the work of the Sustainable Rivers Audit and Outlook First Nations Leadership Group, established in May 2023, has continued. During the year the group worked with the MDBA to prepare a co-authored report to provide a better understanding of the condition of the Basin based on the Sustainable Rivers Audit assessments from an environmental, First Nations, social and economic perspective.

We have sought to further our Nation-by-Nation connections. Engagement opportunities, underpinned by principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent, have been provided for representatives of Nations from across the Basin to inform the 2025 Evaluation and the 2026 Basin Plan Review. This included supporting the preparation of the independent Looking Back to Move Forward Report which provided First Nations perspectives of the impact of the Basin Plan, to directly inform the Basin Plan Evaluation.

We held 8 workshops at regional, sub-Basin and Basin scale, with around 150 representatives from more than 50 First Nations supported to participate and contribute their knowledge and perspectives to inform key areas of focus. These processes have involved the testing and adoption of the MDBA's Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Policy (ICIP), which ensures we respectfully care for contributions shared with us.

We also continue to strengthen our relationships with DCCEEW, the CEWH and Basin states to support the involvement of First Nations peoples in water management, and to better align our collective efforts in this important area.



## Performance on KPI 4: Deliver the Basin Plan Review

KPI 4 is to deliver the Basin Plan Review.

Regular 10-yearly reviews of the Basin Plan allow governments and communities to adjust their approach in response to climate changes, new information and local knowledge.

MDBA is working towards the 2026 Basin Plan Review with a set of milestones scheduled over the next 2 years leading up to the publication of the final report in late 2026. Consultation and feedback are essential aspects of the review process.

**Table 5** Performance against targets for Key activity 1, KPI 4

KPI	Measure	2024–25 Target	Result
<b>KPI 4: Deliver the Basin Plan Review</b>	4.1 Deliver the 2026 Basin Plan Review	Authority approval of the 2025 Basin Plan Evaluation	Met

### Measure 4.1 Deliver the 2026 Basin Plan Review

**About the measure:**

Measure 4.1 aligns with the action to undertake in the 2026 Basin Plan Review. Implementation of the Basin Plan under the Water Act (2007) (Cth) requires the MDBA to deliver the 2026 Basin Plan Review.

**2024–25 Target:**

Authority approval of the 2025 Basin Plan Evaluation.

**How the measure is assessed:**

For Measure 4.1 the target for 2024–25 is approval of the 2025 Basin Plan Evaluation by the Authority.

In the publicly available Roadmap to the 2026 Basin Plan Review, the MDBA committed to release the 2025 Basin Plan Evaluation in mid-2025 to share the lessons from Basin Plan implementation – what have been the successes and what have been the challenges – and to make recommendations for the 2026 Basin Plan Review.

**Result:**

The 2025 Basin Plan Evaluation was finalised and approved for publication at the June Authority meeting, MDBA 193. The Evaluation and supporting documents are set for launch on 24 July 2025 ahead of the annual River Reflections conference on 29–30 July 2025.

# Key activity 2

## Efficiently and effectively operate the River Murray system for partner governments

### Role of the MDBA

In partnership with Basin governments, promote and coordinate planning, management and sharing of water and other natural resources of the Basin. The water sharing and joint management arrangements for this partnership are set out in the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement 2008. The Joint Programs include RMO and natural resource management programs.

The natural resource management programs have evolved as a shared response to the need to manage some of the environmental consequences of water use in the Basin. A work plan and budget is agreed between the Joint Program parties and the MDBA specifying the key activities to be undertaken.

### Objectives

- Run the River Murray system.
- Reform and optimise management of the River Murray system.

### Actions

- Implement asset management strategies and oversee asset management activities.
- Manage and deliver Basin government water shares in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement.
- Maintain and improve the health of the River Murray system (and the Basin where relevant) in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement and associated agreements.
- Uplift transparency and efficiency of the Joint Programs budget and asset management arrangements (Joint Venture Improvement Project).

### Expected impact

- RMO assets allow management and delivery of water that is fit for environmental, social, cultural and economic activity in the Murray–Darling Basin efficiently, effectively and safely.
- The waters of the River Murray system are:
  - shared between the states of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement.
  - managed to meet multiple outcomes and objectives set by Basin governments.
- Improved environmental outcomes in the southern connected system, consistent with the Basin Plan. Delivery of all water for the environment in the southern basin is coordinated, including the jointly held Living Murray water portfolio. Water management, monitoring and First Nations engagement at the River Murray icon sites supports adaptive management.
- Basin governments jointly manage salinity to deliver the Basin Salinity Management 2030 (BSM2030) Strategy, consistent with Schedule B of the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement. The water quality of the River Murray system is monitored consistent with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement. Monitoring informs improved management.

### Performance and analysis

Key activity 2 has two KPIs:

**KPI 5:** Operate the River Murray system in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement.

**KPI 6:** Maintain and improve the health of the River Murray system (and the Basin where relevant) in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement and associated agreements.

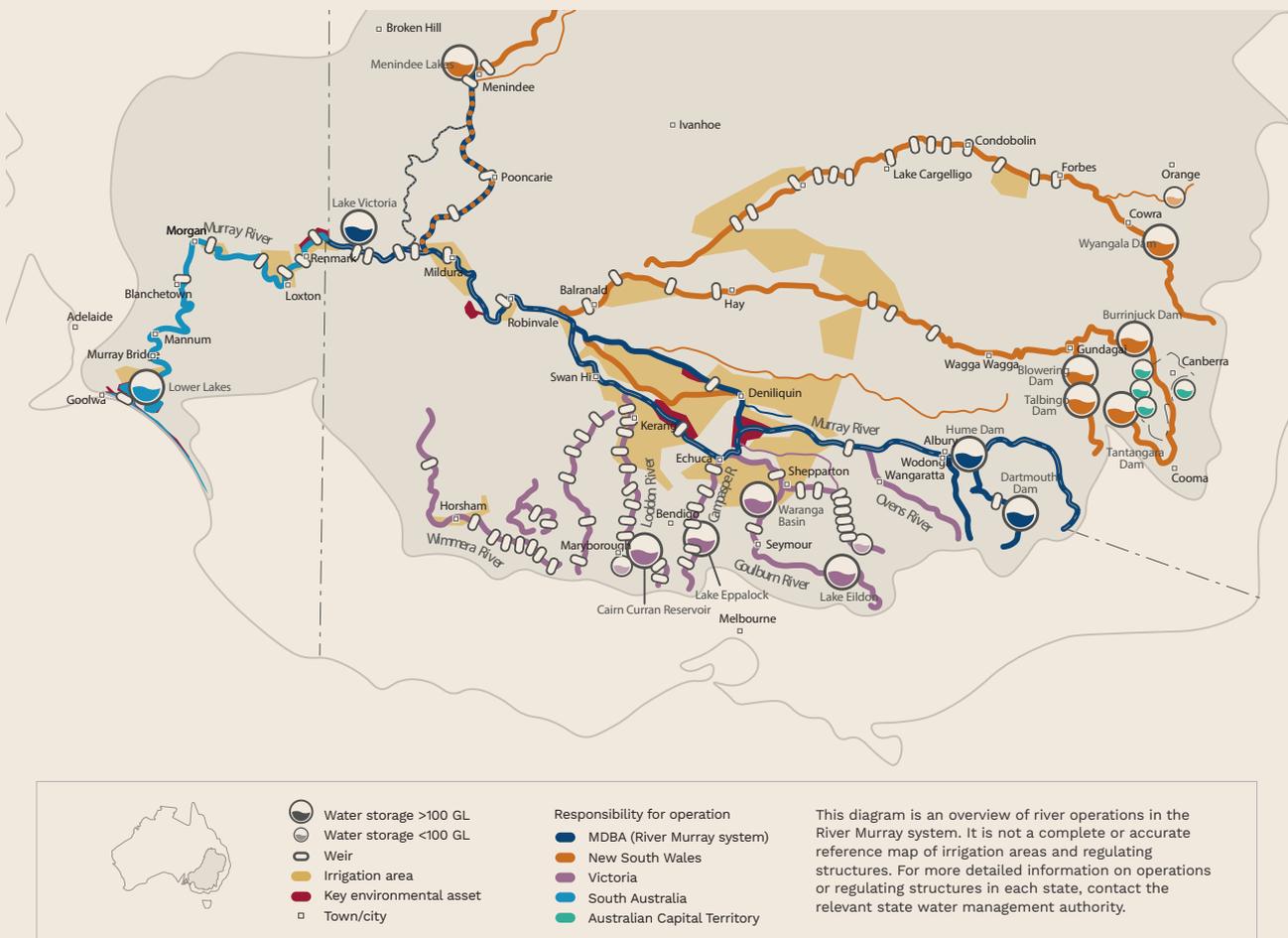
## Performance on KPI 5: Operate the River Murray system in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement

In the Murray–Darling Basin, water is held in storages – lakes or dams – throughout the Basin. Together with other infrastructure such as weirs and locks, river operators use this infrastructure to release water from those storages depending on when and where it is needed.

Figure 9, illustrates how rivers in the Basin are operated, with the MDBA’s responsibility depicted in dark blue. Each state and territory manages its dams and water distribution differently.

The MDBA operates the River Murray system up to the border of South Australia. The River Murray system includes the waterways, storages, weirs and locks of the River Murray in the southern Basin. This infrastructure, referred to as assets, is operated for the River Murray to allow delivery of water efficiently, effectively and safely.

**Figure 9** Overview of the River Murray system and tributaries showing where the MDBA has responsibility for river operations and where it lies with state governments



**Table 6** Performance against targets for Key activity 2, KPI 5

KPI	Measure	2024–25 Target	Result
<b>KPI 5: Operate the River Murray system in accordance with the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement</b>	5.1 The MDBA has coordinated and overseen the asset activities as agreed and approved by the Ministerial Council in the Annual Work Plan	Performance endorsed by the River Murray Operations Committee	Met
	5.2 Number of adverse rulings from jurisdictional dam safety regulators	Zero	Met
	5.3 Number of unscheduled major outages of assets	Zero	Met
	5.4 The MDBA has fulfilled its efficiency related obligations under the objectives and Outcomes as independently assessed	Independent review undertaken for FY 2023–24 to confirm obligations met for 2023–24	Met
	5.5 The MDBA has fulfilled its effectiveness related obligations under the objectives and Outcomes as independently assessed	Independent review undertaken to confirm obligations met	Met



## Operating the River Murray system in 2024–25

River Murray system inflows (not including releases from Snowy Hydro, Inter Valley Transfer (IVT) deliveries, managed environmental deliveries from tributaries and inflows to the Menindee Lakes) during the 2024–25 water year (June 2024 to May 2025) were approximately 3,010 gigalitres (GL) (Figure 10).

In comparison with the historical record since 1896, about 92% of previous water year inflow totals have been higher than those observed in 2024–25 (i.e. an annual exceedance probability (AEP) of 92%). The total is less than half the long-term median inflow volume.

Inflows to Dartmouth Reservoir were 499 GL (85% AEP). Unregulated inflows to Hume Reservoir were around 702 GL (94% AEP). Inflows from the Murrumbidgee, measured at Balranald, totalled 585 GL (63% AEP). An additional 98 GL also flowed into the Murray (via the Edward River) from the Murrumbidgee River via Billabong Creek, measured at Darlot. Inflows from the Goulburn River, measured at McCoys Bridge were 812 GL in 2024–25. IVT delivery through the year totalled 298 GL.

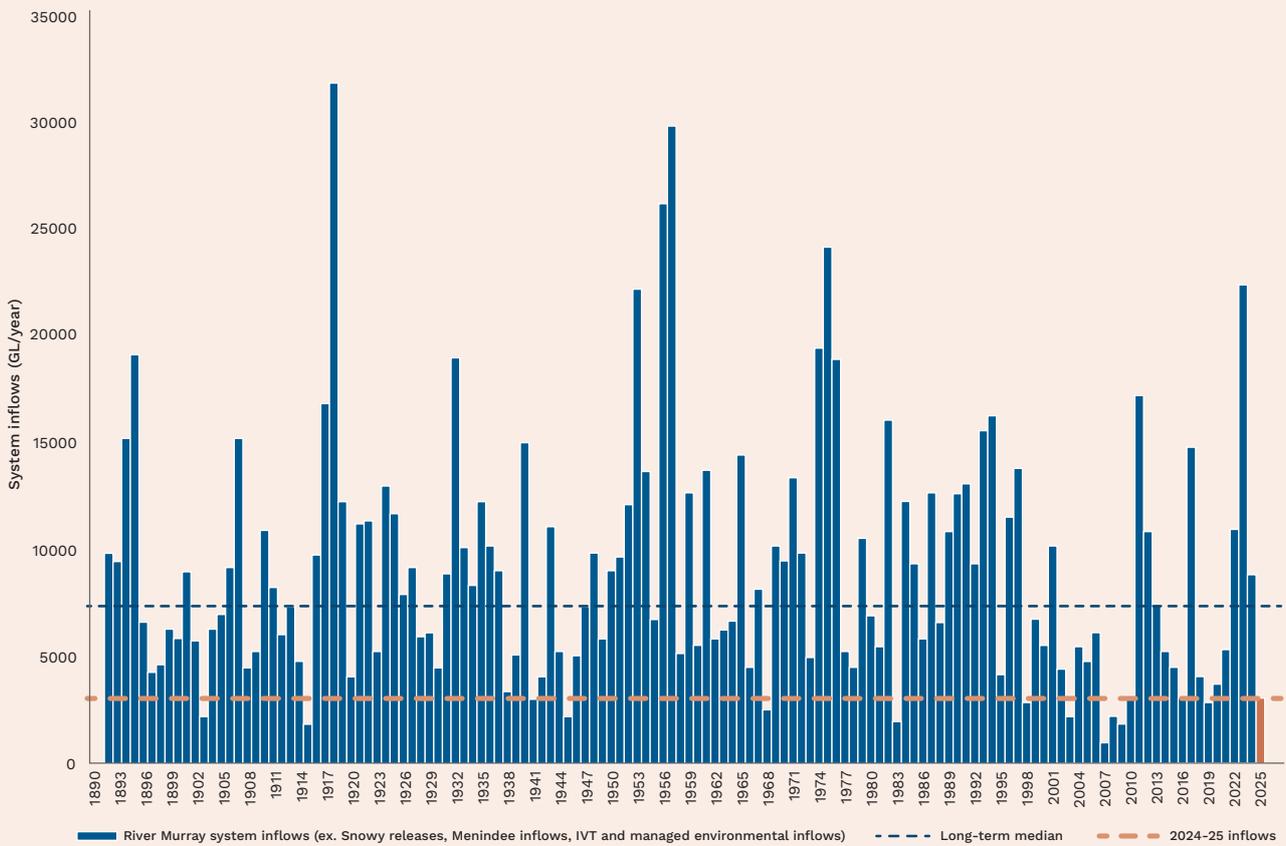
In 2024–25, inflows to the Menindee Lakes were approximately 1,257 GL (36 % AEP), as recorded at the Darling River gauge at Wilcannia upstream of the Menindee Lakes. On the Darling River at Wilcannia, 2 peaks were observed during the water year, starting with a smaller peak of around 16,000 ML/day in early January 2025. In early April 2025, widespread rainfall fell over parts of Queensland and Northern NSW resulting in flooding across catchments in western Queensland and NSW. This resulted in a peak of around 26,000 ML/day at Wilcannia in mid-May 2025. This event saw 970 GL arriving at the Lakes between April and June 2025 with further inflows expected.

Flow to South Australia in 2024–25 was around 3,150 GL for the year, which included the delivery of South Australia’s monthly entitlement and held environmental water.

MDBA active storage on 1 June 2024 was 6,289 GL (74%). By the end of May 2025, the MDBA active storage was around 4,363 GL (56%).

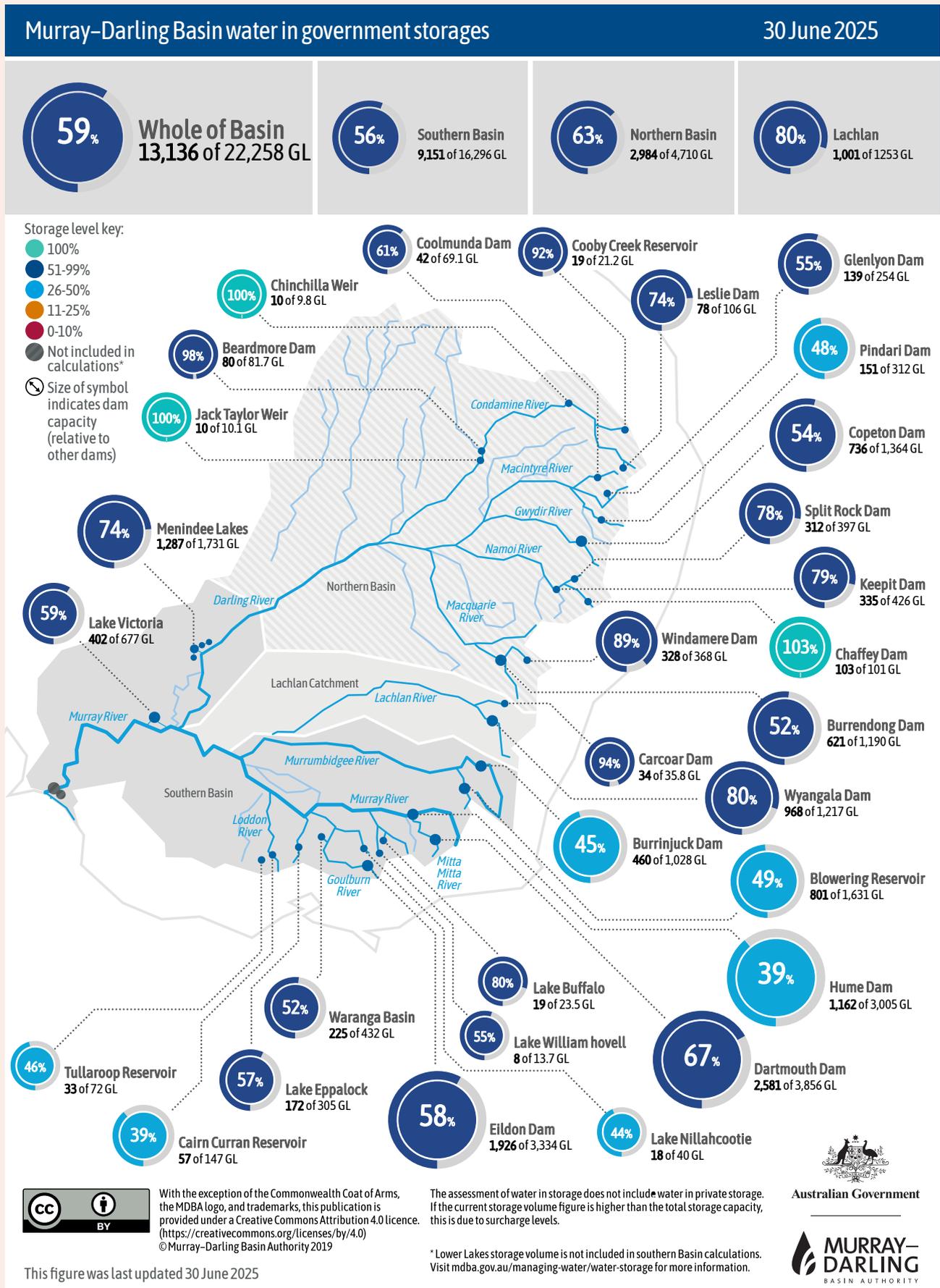
The River Murray Annual Operating Outlook report is available on the [MDBA website](https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/river-murray-system-annual-operating-outlook-2025-26.pdf) [mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/river-murray-system-annual-operating-outlook-2025-26.pdf].

**Figure 10** River Murray system inflows GL, to end May 2025



*Note: The graph excludes Snowy Hydro inflows, IVT delivery, managed environmental inflows and inflows to Menindee Lakes. Blue dashed line shows the long-term median. Orange dashed line shows the 2024–25 inflows compared with all years on record for the 129 years.*

Figure 11 Storage capacity across the Basin as of 30 June 2025



## Measure 5.1 The MDBA has coordinated and overseen the asset activities as agreed and approved by the Ministerial Council in the Annual Work Plan

### About the measure:

Measure 5.1 aligns to the action to implement asset management strategies and oversee asset management activities.

Assets are the structures used to manage water such as major storages, locks, weirs and barrages. Each year, the asset activities are agreed and approved by the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council following endorsement by the appropriate governance committees, including the River Murray Operations Committee (RMOC), Joint Venture Budget and Performance Committee (JVBPC) and BOC, which are made up of representatives from Basin governments.

The activities are set out in an Annual Work Plan, to ensure that assets continue to operate as needed. The Annual Work Plan ensures that the interests of partner governments are protected and that the work is delivered efficiently and is integrated with operational requirements.

### 2024–25 Target:

Performance endorsed by RMOC.

### How the measure is assessed:

For Measure 5.1 the target for 2024–25 is MDBA’s performance is endorsed by RMOC.

The MDBA provides an annual summary of performance against the agreed Annual Work Plan to RMOC for endorsement. The report summarises:

- Performance against agreed deliverables.
- Expenditure against agreed budget.
- Assessment by the Independent River Operations Review Group (IRORG).
- Overall achievements and process improvements.

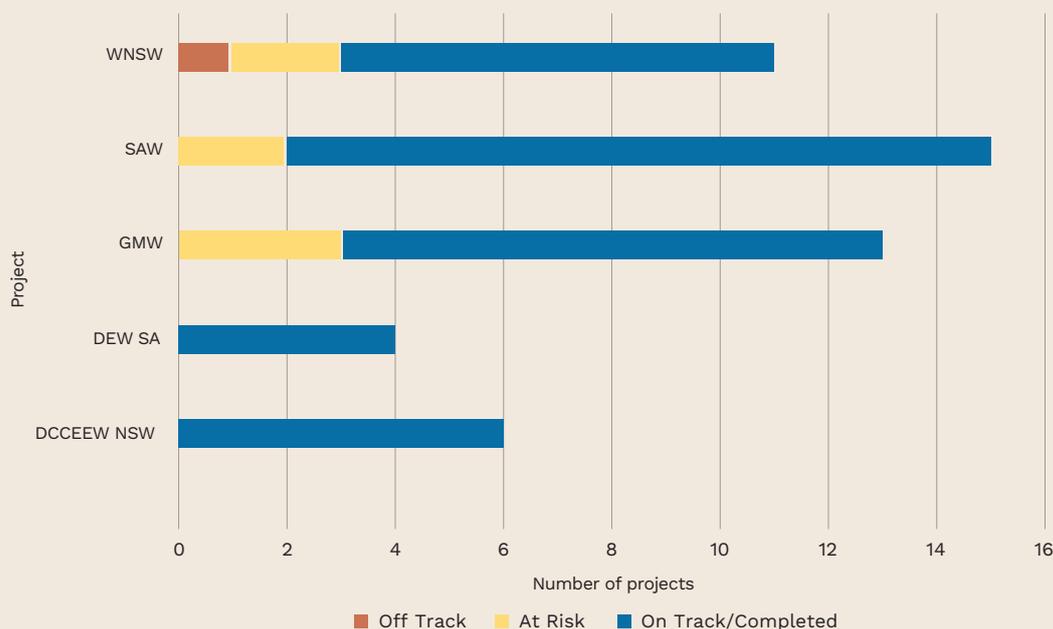
The RMOC, JVBPC and BOC endorse performance by reviewing the report and supporting briefing. The formal record of meetings provides evidence that performance is endorsed.

### Result:

The 2024–25 target has been met.

The Ministerial Council are regularly informed of progress against Annual Work Plan through quarterly reports and other ad-hoc briefings. This includes adjustments enabling the MDBA to respond to emerging risks and opportunities such as the revised approach taken to the Koondrook-Perricoota Inlet Regulator.

Figure 12 Performance against agreed 2024–25 Annual Work Plan deliverables for assets program



## Measure 5.2 Number of adverse rulings from jurisdictional dam safety regulators

### About the measure:

Measure 5.2 aligns to the intended impact of the action 'implement asset management strategies and oversee asset management activities'.

It is crucial that dams are safe to avoid risks to life, property and the environment from dam failure. Dam safety must be considered throughout the life cycle of each dam, from design and construction to decommissioning. Safety must also be ensured during operations and maintenance.

The MDBA oversees the RMO asset program to manage dam safety in accordance with state dam safety legislation or, where that does not exist, the Australian National Committee on Large Dams guidelines.

State dam safety regulators can submit adverse rulings if they identify inadequate dam safety.

### 2024–25 Target:

The 2024–25 target is zero.

### How the measure is assessed:

Adverse rulings are received through the following process:

- States undertake assessment of compliance with best practice standards, recording all instances of non-compliance.
- Any instance of non-compliance results in an adverse ruling, which will be received via letter or email directly from state-based dam safety regulators working in accordance with state legislation.

All correspondence and assessments from the dam safety regulators or other stakeholders are kept in the MDBA's record management system.

Adverse rulings are reported in the MDBA's annual report.

### Result:

The 2024–25 target has been met. There were no adverse rulings from dam safety regulators.



## Measure 5.3 Number of unscheduled major outages of assets

### About the measure:

Measure 5.3 aligns to the intended impact of the action ‘implement asset management strategies and oversee asset management activities’.

Unscheduled major outages of assets could impact on the ability to deliver water as required under the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement and the Basin Plan. This measure demonstrates MDBA oversight in managing River Murray assets in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement and the Basin Plan.

### 2024–25 Target:

The 2024–25 target is zero.

### How the measure is assessed:

The MDBA’s maintenance and operation of the River Murray system is reviewed by the IRORG, the advisory committee established under section 203 of the Water Act. More information about the IRORG can be found on the [MDBA website](https://www.mdba.gov.au/about-us/governance-and-committees/independent-river-operations-review-group) [mdba.gov.au/about-us/governance-and-committees/independent-river-operations-review-group].

Unscheduled major outages of assets are reported in the annual review of the IRORG, and in the MDBA annual report.

Annual reporting occurs as part of the IRORG review process. In the event of an outage which has exceptional impacts the issue would be reported at the time through well-established governance arrangements. IRORG reports are published on the [MDBA website](https://www.mdba.gov.au/publications/independent-reports/river-murray-system-annual-summaries-reviews-river-operations) [mdba.gov.au/publications/independent-reports/river-murray-system-annual-summaries-reviews-river-operations].

### Result:

The 2024–25 target has been met.

No unscheduled major outages were reported at principal Murray River asset sites. Koondrook–Perricoota Inlet Regulator is exhibiting signs of piping failure. WaterNSW are mobilising emergency intervention due to structural instability.

Ongoing planned investment in assets is needed to reduce the risk of unscheduled major outages.



## Measures 5.4 and 5.5 The MDBA has fulfilled its efficiency and effectiveness related obligations under the objectives and Outcomes as independently assessed

### About the measures:

Measures 5.4 and 5.5 align to the intended impact of the Key Activity to manage and deliver Basin government water shares in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement.

### 2024–25 Target:

Measures 5.4 and 5.5 are that the MDBA has fulfilled its efficiency and effectiveness related obligations under the O&O set by the BOC. As for measure 5.3, these measures are independently assessed by IRORG.

### How the measure is assessed:

The O&Os for River Operations in the River Murray system are agreed by BOC pursuant to clause 31 of the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement. The O&Os list 24 outcomes grouped under the following 5 headings:

- Water storage and delivery and accounting.
- RMO assets.
- People and communities.
- Environment.
- Communication and information management.

Measure 5.4 assesses performance against 4 efficiency-related outcomes. Measure 5.5 assesses performance against 20 effectiveness-related outcomes. The methodology is the same for both groups.

There is a quarterly self-assessment of performance against the O&Os with a formal check from the Water Liaison Working Group. An independent assessment is made annually by IRORG, based on the MDBA's annual River Murray System Summary of River Operations as well as consultation with the Basin states.

Under the agreed O&O, IRORG provides its report on the June to May water year to the MDBA. This informs the MDBA's annual report in the following year (annual report deadlines make it impossible to consider IRORG's report in the MDBA annual report for the same year). Therefore, the 2023–24 results are reported in the MDBA 2024–25 annual report.

IRORG reports are published on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/publications/independent-reports/river-murray-system-annual-summaries-reviews-river-operations) [mdba.gov.au/publications/independent-reports/river-murray-system-annual-summaries-reviews-river-operations].

### Result:

The 2024–25 targets for measures 5.4 and 5.5 have been met.

In December 2024, IRORG's report on the 2023–24 water year was completed with a finding that the MDBA had achieved all the efficiency and effectiveness related outcomes during the 2023–24 water year.

You can read the report on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/river-murray-system-annual-summaries-and-reviews-river) [mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/river-murray-system-annual-summaries-and-reviews-river].

## Performance on KPI 6:

### Maintain and improve the health of the River Murray system (and the Basin where relevant) in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement and associated agreements

KPI 6 has 3 measures related to the health of the River Murray system: report cards on the health of key sites along the river, Basin salinity targets and adequate monitoring and reporting on water quality.

To benefit humans and wildlife, water availability and water quality must be carefully managed to ensure the Basin stays healthy, now and in the future.

Water availability needs to be managed through effective use of storages during times of extreme weather events.

Water quality can be affected by many environmental factors and weather events. Major threats include blackwater (low dissolved oxygen), bushfires, erosion, blooms of blue-green algae, high salinity, sulfide build-up in soils and erosion. All can make water less safe for humans, plants and animals.

Find out more about water quality threats on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/climate-and-river-health/water-quality-threats) [mdba.gov.au/climate-and-river-health/water-quality-threats].

While natural events that compromise water quality cannot be controlled, monitoring is an important first step in managing water quality issues and potentially reducing their impact. Water quality targets are in place for managing water flows, water resource planning, and long-term salinity monitoring and management.

**Table 7** Performance against targets for Key activity 2, KPI 6

KPI	Measure	2024–25 Target	Result
<b>KPI 6 Maintain and improve the health of the River Murray system (and the Basin where relevant) in accordance with Murray–Darling Basin Agreement and associated agreements</b>	6.1 Maintain or improve the environmental health of the 7 key sites of the River Murray system	Majority (70%) of sites are either maintained in good condition (A or B report card grade) or have an improved report card grade from the previous year	Met
	6.2 The Basin salinity target, as identified in schedule B of the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement, is achieved	The average daily salinity at Morgan at a simulated level of less than 800 EC for at least 95% of the time, under the hydrologic conditions of the benchmark period	Met
	6.3 Timely monitoring and reporting on water quality in the River Murray system to aid in decision making	100% monthly reports sent and/or published	Met

## 6.1 Maintain or improve the environmental health of the 7 key sites of the River Murray system

### About this measure:

Measure 6.1 aligns with the intended impact of the action ‘maintain and improve the health of the River Murray system in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement and associated agreements’.

The 7 key sites are icon sites of The Living Murray initiative (LMI), a partnership between the Australian Government and Basin states. The Living Murray aims to improve the environmental health of significant forests, wetlands and lakes along the River Murray as part of helping to deliver the Basin Plan O&Os. The initiative is managed by the MDBA.

The icon sites are locations along the River Murray chosen for their high ecological value and cultural significance to First Nations peoples and regional communities. Each site is regionally and nationally significant and most are recognised internationally under the Ramsar Convention.

The Living Murray icon sites are considered important indicator sites, providing information about the health of the River Murray system.

### 2024–25 Target:

Majority (70%) of sites are either maintained in good condition (A or B report card grade) or have an improved report card grade from the previous year.

### How the measure is assessed:

Each year, the MDBA monitors and reports on the health of the icon sites using a report card system. Site report cards contain condition grades that are derived from 80 to 100 environmental monitoring reports each year (fish, birds, vegetation). The measure determines the percentage of key sites in the River Murray that have either maintained or improved condition. There is a one-year lag in reporting due to time needed to assess and assemble the monitoring reports, so this year, site condition assessments are for 2023–24.

Results are reported in the MDBA annual report and the report cards are published on the MDBA website.

### Result:

For the 2023–24 water year, 6 out of the 7 (85%) Living Murray icon sites were in good or excellent condition (A or B condition grades). The exception was Koondrook–Perricoota which remained in poor condition (D grade), where there are ongoing challenges preventing the operation of environmental works to deliver water to the forest.

Delivering water for the environment during and following wet years helps enhance the health of rivers and their floodplains and builds resilience. Strategic use of water for the environment following high natural flows is critical for ensuring water levels are sustained for environmental processes to finish, such as waterbird breeding and fish spawning and recruitment.

In 2023–24 there were a broad range of positive ecological outcomes particularly for floodplain vegetation and waterbirds and some modest recovery for native fish. Low population counts for waterbirds and poor riparian vegetation condition remain key risks for the health of the end of system site at Coorong Lower Lakes and the Murray mouth.

You can view the annual icon site report cards on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/climate-and-river-health/water-environment/progress-and-outcomes-improving-system) [mdba.gov.au/climate-and-river-health/water-environment/progress-and-outcomes-improving-system].



## The Living Murray aims to improve the environmental health of significant forests, wetlands and lakes along the River Murray

Figure 13 Icon site report card grades for 2024–25



### Grades

<b>A</b>	<b>Excellent</b> Most (75–100%) of ecological objectives have been met.
<b>B</b>	<b>Good</b> More than half (50–74%) of ecological objectives have been met.
<b>C</b>	<b>Fair</b> Fewer than half (25–49%) of ecological objectives have been met.
<b>D</b>	<b>Needs attention</b> Few (0–24%) of ecological objectives have been met.
<b>-</b>	<b>Data not available</b>

Condition grade is based on how well the sites are tracking against ecological objectives for birds, fish and vegetation at each site.

Shape indicates how condition compares to the previous year. For example, a downward arrow means fewer objectives were met compared to the previous year, and a box shape means condition was maintained.

## 6.2 The Basin salinity target, as identified in schedule B of the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement, is achieved

### About the measure:

Measure 6.2 aligns to the intended impact of the action ‘maintain and improve the health of the River Murray system in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement and associated agreements’.

BSM2030 is a strategy for managing salinity in the Basin. This performance measure is the percentage of the BSM2030 salinity targets described in Schedule B of the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement that were achieved. The requirement of the BSM2030 strategy is to achieve the salinity targets on an annual basis.

The BSM2030 strategy’s focus is to keep salinity levels in shared water resources in a range appropriate to protect economic, environmental, cultural and social values. When the elements of the strategy are implemented and Murray–Darling Basin Agreement obligations are met, it contributes significantly to maintaining and improving the health of the River Murray system.

The impacts of any works, measures, or development activity undertaken by Basin governments on river salinity are assessed using computer models of the river system, recorded in a register and published annually. In this process, the achievement of the Basin salinity target is assessed, reported annually and reviewed by the Independent Audit Group for Salinity every 2 years.

The Basin salinity target is to maintain the average daily salinity at Morgan at a simulated level of less than 800 electrical conductivity (EC) for at least 95% of the time. This is modelled over the benchmark period (1975–2000) under the current land and water management regime. The benchmark period provides a mechanism for consistently assessing river salinity outcomes over a climatic sequence that includes both wet and dry periods.

### 2024–25 Target:

The average daily salinity at Morgan at a simulated level of less than 800 EC for at least 95% of the time, under the hydrologic conditions of the benchmark period.

### How the measure is assessed:

The Basin salinity target reflects the importance of ensuring salinity is kept at levels appropriate to protect economic, environmental, cultural and social values. It is achieved by maintaining the average daily salinity at Morgan at a simulated level of less than 800 EC for at least 95% of the time, under the hydrologic conditions of the benchmark period.

The impacts of any works and measures and development activity undertaken by Basin governments on river salinity are assessed using the MDBA’s river model and recorded in a register.

Achievement of the Basin salinity target is retrospective and based on modelling results from the previous reporting period since it takes time to finalise the salinity register each year.

Outcomes are reported to the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council annually. BSM2030 strategy reports are also published annually on the MDBA website. The BSM2030 strategy implementation is audited biennially (in the years the BSM2030 comprehensive reporting is carried out) by the Independent Audit Group for Salinity.

### Result:

The 2024–25 target has been met.

The 2024 salinity register is complete. The BSM2030 strategy reports were provided to BOC in December 2024 and the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council (out of session) in February 2025.

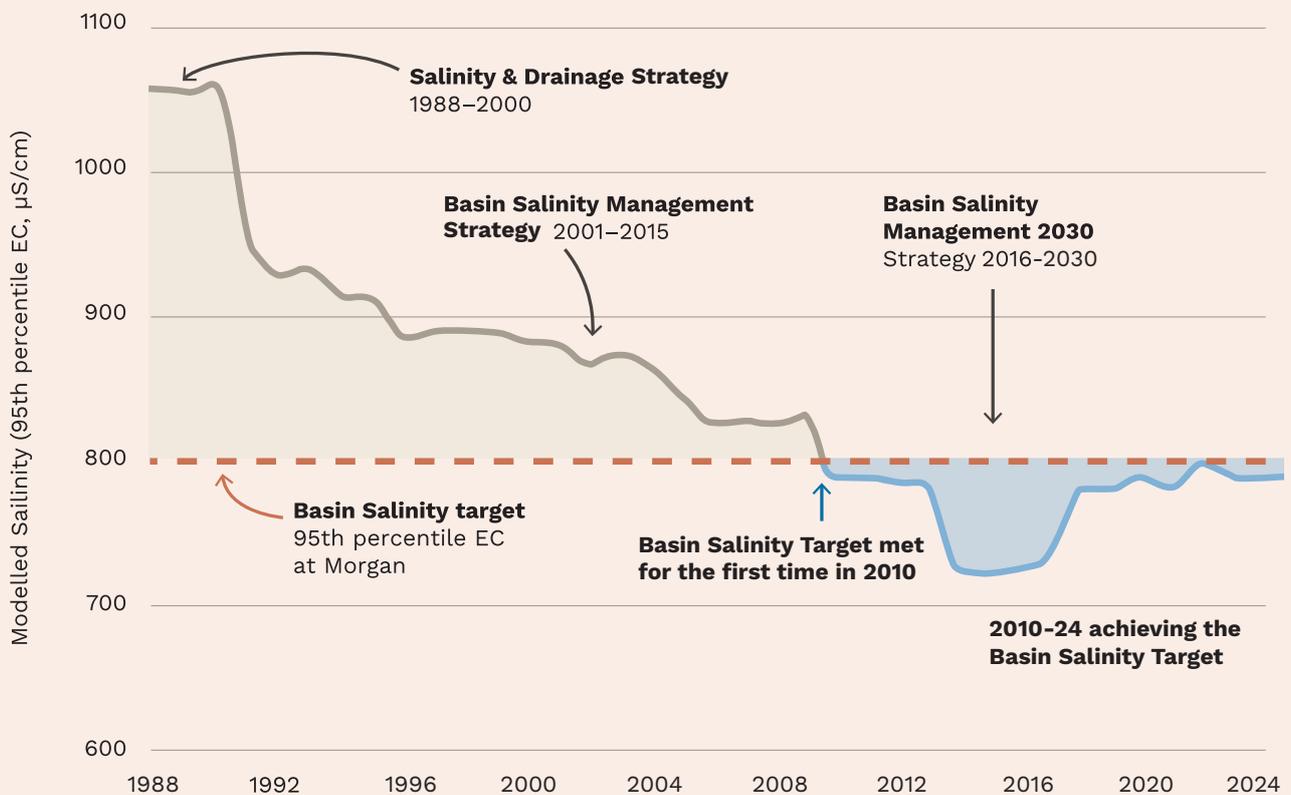
The achievement of the Basin salinity target is retrospective and based on modelling results which will be finalised in October 2025. Based on the preliminary reports and assessments made through to June 2025, the target is expected to be met for 2024–25 reporting period.

More information about salinity and the Report of the Independent Audit Group, as well as the BSM2030 summary report, are available on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/basin-salinity-management-2030-strategies-and-reports) [mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/basin-salinity-management-2030-strategies-and-reports].



## BSM2030 aims to keep salinity levels in a range that improves the health of the River Murray system

**Figure 14** Effect of salinity management programs measured at Morgan in South Australia, 1988-2024 (excluding Basin Plan and the Living Murray actions)



**Notes:** The graph shows modelled 95th percentile salinity over the 1975–2000 benchmark period with the Basin salinity target shown by the dashed orange line. These results do not include salinity benefits from the Basin Plan Implementation and the Living Murray initiative.

### 6.3 Timely monitoring and reporting on water quality in the River Murray system to aid in decision making River Murray system

#### About the measure:

Measure 6.3 aligns to the intended impact of the action to ‘maintain and improve the health of the River Murray system in accordance with the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement and associated agreements’.

The water quality monitoring data, reports and investigations are used by the MDBA and the inter-jurisdictional Tier 2 Water Quality Advisory Panel (WQAP) as well as state agencies, potable and irrigation suppliers and researchers.

Ongoing tracking of the water quality of the River Murray system is carried out under the River Murray Water Quality Program (RMWQMP). Regular monitoring and reporting provide an ongoing indicator of the health of the River Murray system.

#### 2024–25 Target:

100% monthly reports sent and/or published.

#### How the measure is assessed:

Water quality monitoring of the River Murray and lower Darling at 28 sites is funded by the Joint Programs and undertaken by state agencies through the RMWQMP.

The RMWQMP provides a measure of water quality information to inform the current status and trends in water quality across the River Murray system. Water quality threats maps are published at least monthly on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/water-management/managing-water-quality/water-quality-threats) [mdba.gov.au/water-management/managing-water-quality/water-quality-threats].

Achievement of this measure will be determined by evaluating the percentage of months between July and June in which **at least one water quality threat map was published**. A target of 100% indicates regular and transparent reporting of changing water quality risks over time.

#### Result:

The 2024–25 target has been met.

Monitoring and reporting on water quality data from the 28 sites in the River Murray system was completed and published on data.gov.au. All the water quality threat maps were prepared monthly and published in the MDBA website for the use by river management and the general public.

More information about managing water quality is available on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/climate-and-river-health/water-quality/water-quality-threats) [mdba.gov.au/climate-and-river-health/water-quality/water-quality-threats].





# *Part 3*

## Management and accountability

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# Governance

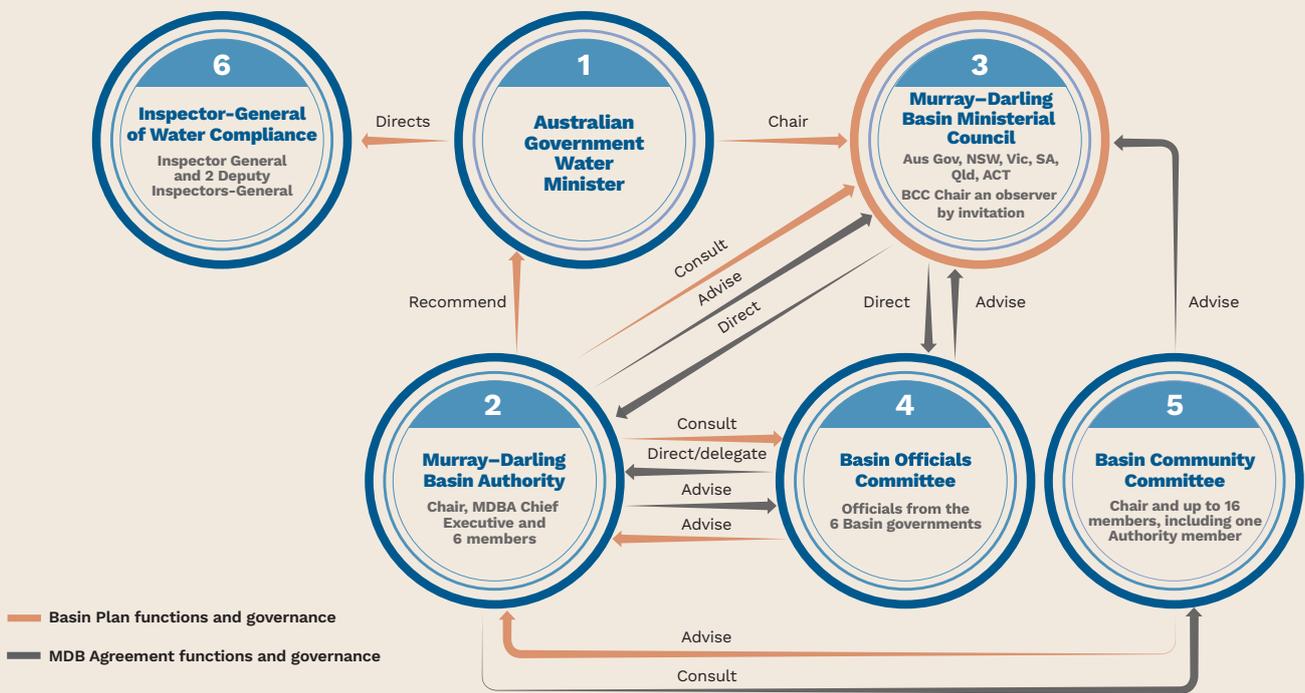
The Murray–Darling Basin Authority Board (the Authority) is established under the Water Act. The Authority is supported by the MDBA an independent government agency.

Water in the Basin is managed through a cooperative arrangement between the Australian Government and the governments of the Basin states – New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory.

The Water Act, Basin Plan and Murray–Darling Basin Agreement provide the framework to ensure that water is shared between all users in a sustainable way.

The governance model incorporates a range of councils and committees that support the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Water in fulfilling their decision-making responsibilities (see Figure 15).

Figure 15 The MDBA governance arrangements and core functions



1	2	3	4	5	6
The decision maker on the Basin Plan and chairs Ministerial Council	Responsible for developing, implementing, evaluating and reviewing the Basin Plan Manages the River Murray system on behalf of joint governments	Policy and decision-making roles on state water shares and funding of joint programs as per the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement	Implements decisions consistent with the directions from the Ministerial Council and advises on the Basin Plan	Provides advice to the Authority and Ministerial Council on Basin community issues	Provides independent oversight of, and monitors compliance with, the Basin Plan, water resource plans and intergovernmental agreements and arrangements

## Australian Government water minister

The MDBA reports to Senator the Hon Murray Watt, who was appointed Minister for the Environment and Water on 13 May 2025. The Minister also chairs the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council and, in accordance with the Water Act, may direct the Authority in the performance of its functions.

## The Authority

The Authority is comprised of the Chair, MDBA Chief Executive, 2 First Nations members and 4 part-time members appointed by the Governor-General. The Authority is established in accordance with sections 177 and 178 of the Water Act and plays a critical role in Basin-wide governance.

Authority members are appointed based on their specialised skills and experience in areas relevant to water resource management, governance, environmental, community and First Nations matters.

The appointment process is set out in the Water Act and the 2008 Intergovernmental Agreement on Murray–Darling Basin Reform and is managed by DCCEEW throughout the reporting period.

As at 30 June 2025, the members of the Authority were:

- Daryl Quinlivan AO, Authority Chair
- Professor Stuart Bunn, Authority Member
- Dr Jane Doolan, Authority Member
- Belinda Duarte AM, Authority Member
- Roseanne Healy, Authority Member
- Andrew McConville, MDBA Chief Executive
- Allison Mudford, Authority Member
- Rene Woods, Authority Member.

The Authority collaborates with, and takes advice from, DCCEEW, the CEWH and Basin jurisdictions. It also receives advice from:

- advisory committees established under the Water Act, including the Advisory Committee on Social, Economic and Environmental Sciences (ACSEES) and the BCC; and
- the MDBA on Basin-wide strategy, policy and planning.

The Authority works closely with Basin communities, industry, environmental groups, and other government agencies, including the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). Regular briefings from these stakeholders help ensure that the Authority's decisions are well-informed and evidence based.

Information about the Authority, including the Authority's Communiqués, published after each meeting, is available on the [MDBA website](https://www.mdba.gov.au/about-us/who-we-are/authority) [mdba.gov.au/about-us/who-we-are/authority].

Further information on Authority members can be found in Appendix A.

## Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council

The Authority is accountable to the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council for matters under the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement. The Ministerial Council develops and coordinates policy for the effective planning and sustainable use of water, land and other environmental resources of the Basin.

It can give directions to the BOC regarding its functions and powers, and it may seek the advice of the BCC.

The Ministerial Council comprises of the Australian Government minister responsible for water and the ministers responsible for water from each Basin jurisdiction.

As at 30 June 2025, the members were:

- Australian Government – Senator the Hon Murray Watt
- New South Wales – The Hon Rose Jackson MP
- Victoria – The Hon Gayle Tierney MP
- Queensland – The Hon Ann Leahy MP
- South Australia – The Hon Dr Susan Close MP
- Australian Capital Territory – Ms Suzanne Orr MLA.



## Basin Officials Committee

The BOC is established under Part IV of the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement. It is the peak body of Basin government officials providing advice to decision-makers on all Murray–Darling Basin matters.

The BOC facilitates cooperation and coordination between the Australian Government, the Basin states and the MDBA in funding works and managing water and other natural resources of the Basin. It is responsible for implementing the policy decisions of the Ministerial Council.

The BOC consists of a senior official from each Basin jurisdiction. It is chaired by the Australian Government member. The MDBA Chief Executive is an advisor to the BOC and, along with the Authority Chair, can attend and participate in BOC meetings but cannot participate in meeting decisions.

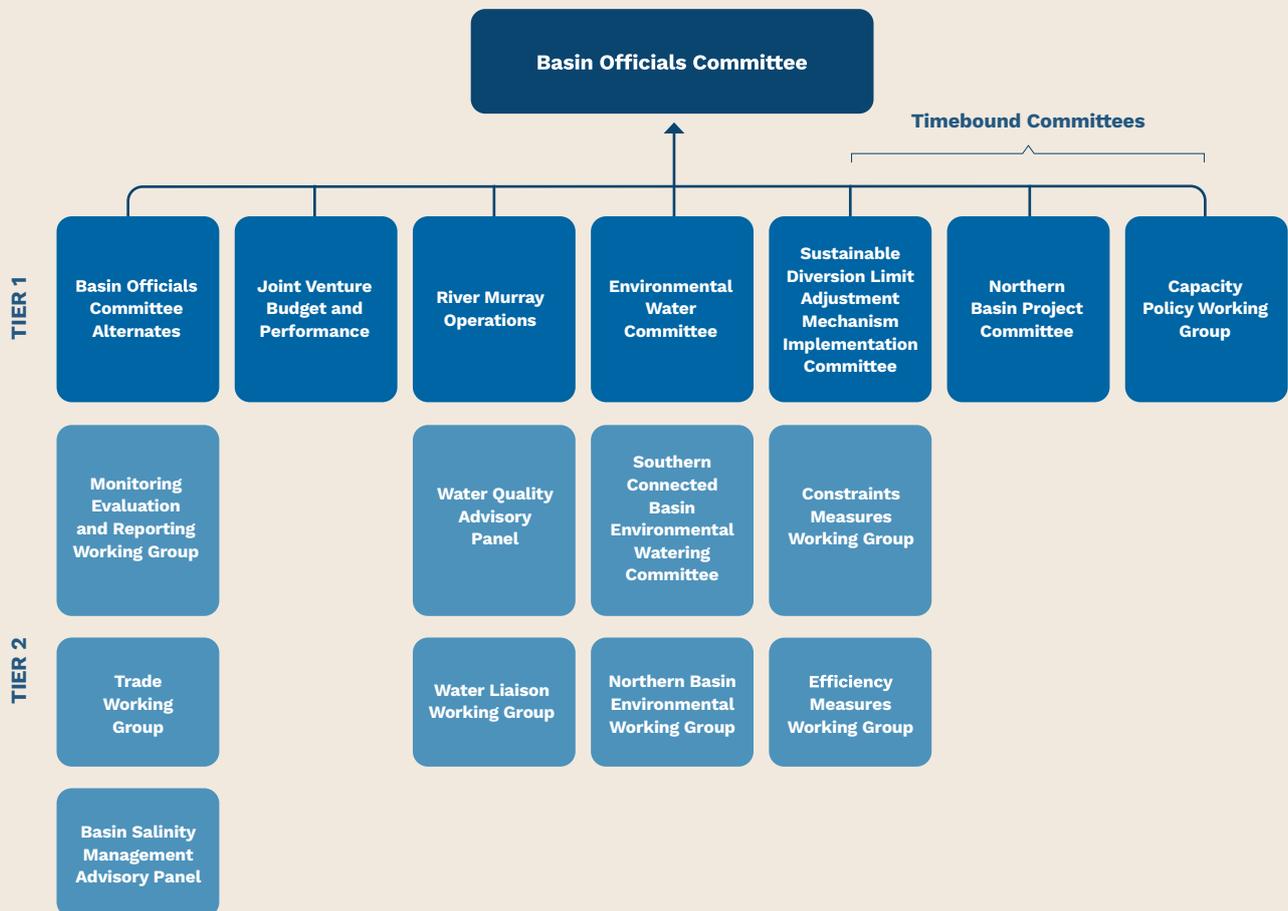
As at 30 June 2025, the members were:

- Australian Government – Lyn O’Connell (Chair)
- New South Wales – Mitchell Isaacs
- Victoria – Kirsten Shelly
- Queensland – Jarrod Cowley-Grimmond
- South Australia – Dan Jordan
- Australian Capital Territory – Geoffrey Rutledge.

There are 4 standing committees and 3 time-bound committees that report to the BOC as shown in Figure 16.

Information about the BOC is available on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/about-us/governance-and-committees/basin-officials-committee) [mdba.gov.au/about-us/governance-and-committees/basin-officials-committee].

Figure 16 Structure of the BOC





## Basin Community Committee

The BCC is established under the Water Act to provide a community perspective on a wide range of water resource, environmental, cultural and socioeconomic matters in the Basin.

It provides advice to the Authority and the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council and engages with the BOC, the department and Authority advisory committees.

Members come from all over the Basin (see Figure 17), and each has expertise and interest in water use, water management, First Nations and local government matters.

BCC members are key local contacts for the Authority.

As at 30 June 2025, members of the BCC and their locations were:

- Rachel Kelly (Chair) – Mid-Murray and Murrumbidgee
- Rosalie Auricht – Riverland
- Johanna Brighenti – Murrumbidgee
- Andrew Drysdale – Condamine
- Edward Fessey – Barwon-Darling
- Mike Gilby – Sunraysia
- Jonathon Howard – Upper Murray
- Kate McBride – Lower Darling
- Feli McHughes – Barwon-Darling
- Allison Mudford (Authority member) – Macquarie-Castlereagh
- Samantha O’Toole – Lower Balonne
- John Pettigrew – Goulburn-Broken
- Michael Pisasale – Mid Murray
- John Shannon – Border Rivers
- Anthony Sharley – Lower Murray
- Emelia Sudholz – Wimmera
- Adrian Weston – Goulburn-Broken.

More information about the BCC can be found on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/about-us/governance-and-committees/basin-community-committee) [mdba.gov.au/about-us/governance-and-committees/basin-community-committee].

Figure 17 BCC Members as at June 2025



## Advisory committees

Under section 203 of the Water Act, the MDBA can establish advisory committees to assist it in performing its functions. As at 30 June 2025, there were 6 committees, each of which focuses on specific matters:

- ACSEES
- IRORG
- River Murray Asset Advisory Panel
- Salt Interception Technical Working Group
- Advisory Group Hume–Yarrawonga Waterway Management
- Basin Plan Evaluation Advisory Committee.

### Advisory Committee on Social, Economic and Environmental Sciences

ACSEES is an important source of independent, strategic advice to the MDBA.

ACSEES reviews and advises on the science that informs Basin Plan implementation, as well as the broader scientific context of the MDBA's work, including adaptation to future climates, environmental management and the monitoring and evaluation of Basin health and Basin Plan outcomes.

Fostering partnerships and the communication of Basin science within academic, community and industry networks are also important components of the committee's role.

The committee's work helps ensure the Basin Plan can be confidently implemented with the support of robust science and knowledge.

ACSEES members have high standing in the areas of hydrology, ecology and natural resource management, climate sciences, economics, social and cultural values, and water governance and law.

ACSEES formally meets twice per year, with additional out-of-session engagement arranged as needed. Authority Board member Professor Stuart Bunn attends the formal ACSEES meetings as an observer. The Chair of ACSEES is Adjunct Professor William Young.

More information about ACSEES can be found on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/about-us/governance-and-committees/advisory-committee-social-economic-and-environmental-sciences) [mdba.gov.au/about-us/governance-and-committees/advisory-committee-social-economic-and-environmental-sciences].

### Independent River Operations Review Group

The IRORG, established under the Water Act, reviews the MDBA's performance in river operations and water sharing activities.

This includes reviewing the outcomes of the MDBA's environmental water delivery actions, operation of the River Murray increased flows, operation of South Australia's storage right and the MDBA's compliance with the river operations O&Os set by the BOC.

IRORG assesses the MDBA's performance and compliance with these O&Os at the end of each water year (1 June to 31 May).

More information about the IRORG can be found on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/about-us/governance-and-committees/independent-river-operations-review-group) [mdba.gov.au/about-us/governance-and-committees/independent-river-operations-review-group].

# Organisational structure

At 30 June 2025, the MDBA had 4 divisions, led by the Chief Executive with branches organised within these divisions to deliver the organisation's business and operational priorities. See the organisation chart at Figure 18.

The head of each division sits on the Executive Board, which establishes the organisation's strategic direction and risk mitigation strategies for projects and programs for all investments.

The divisions are:

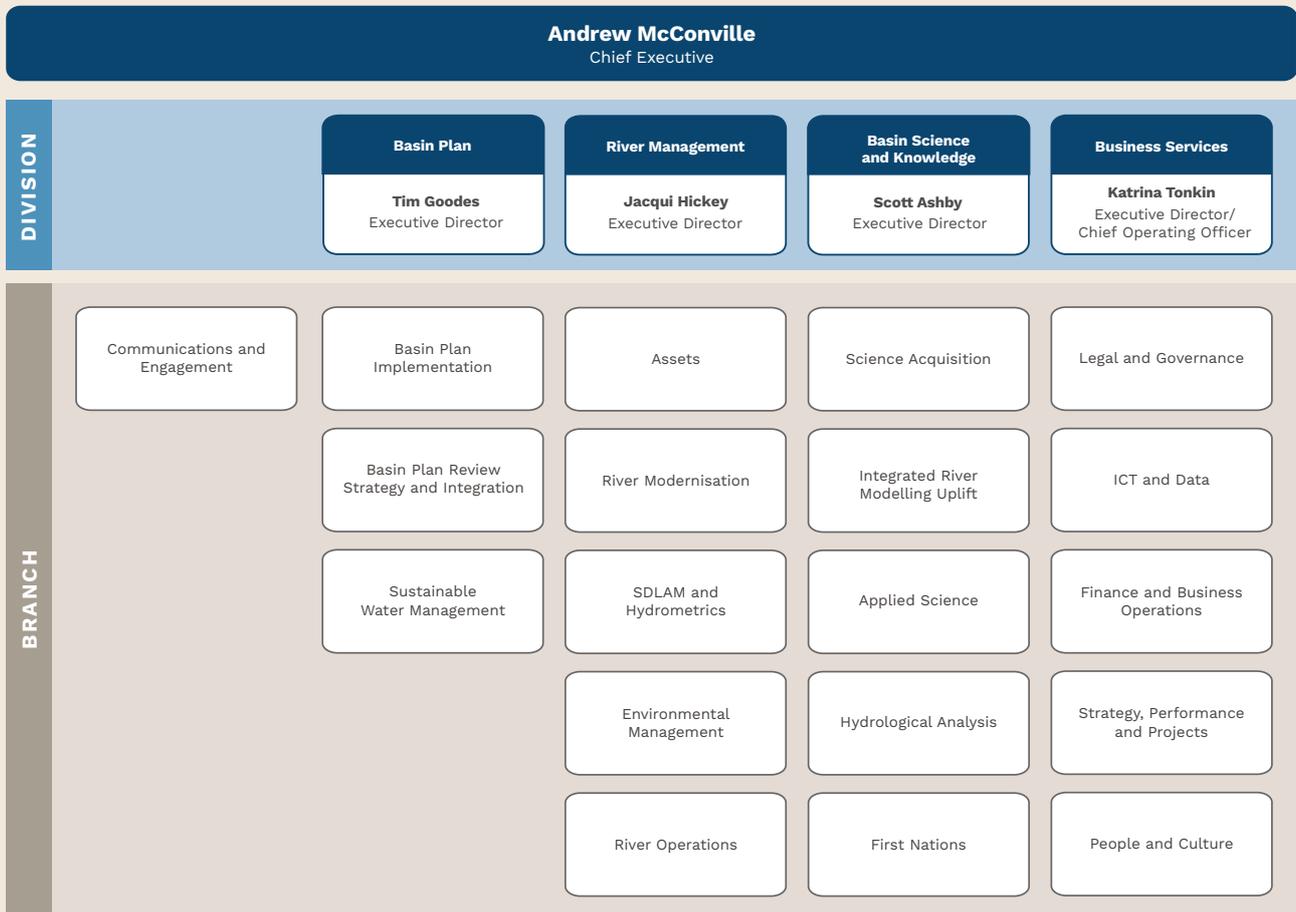
**Basin Plan** – focuses on Basin Plan policy, implementation, review, water accounting and the assessment of WRPs. It includes the monitoring and evaluation aspects of the Basin Plan.

**River Management** – works with state partners to lead the integration and delivery of environmental and operational water needs and manage river operations.

**Basin Science and Knowledge** – ensures best-available science and knowledge, including First Nations perspectives, informs policy development and decision making.

**Business Services** – runs the business of the MDBA, including financial management, people and culture, parliamentary and secretariat services and data and information management.

Figure 18 The MDBA organisational structure as at 30 June 2025



## Where are we located

Our workforce is distributed across the Basin, with over a third (38%) of our staff based in one of our 6 regional offices. The remainder are dispersed across various other locations with the rest working from our Canberra office (see Table 8).

This strong regional presence benefits both our organisation and the communities in which our staff work. For regional centres, it helps create jobs, boost economic diversification, and allows better communication of community perspectives from staff who have an understanding of local values.

## MDBA Executive Board

The Executive Board is the peak internal governance, decision-making body and leadership forum of the MDBA. The Executive Board is responsible for providing advice to the MDBA Authority, ensuring all statutory requirements are met and managing MDBA operations in an effective and efficient manner.

The Executive Board comprises senior leaders of the MDBA and sets the MDBA's strategic direction, informed by the integrated business planning approach, and makes decisions on priorities and resourcing. It also determines the MDBA's risk appetite and tolerance and oversees the management of strategic risks that may affect the organisation's ability to achieve its purpose and objectives.

As at 30 June 2025, the MDBA Executive Board members were:

- Andrew McConville, Chair of the Executive Board; Chief Executive
- Scott Ashby, Executive Director, Basin Science and Knowledge
- Tim Goodes, Executive Director, Basin Plan
- Jacqui Hickey, Executive Director, River Management
- Katrina Tonkin, Executive Director, Business Services; Chief Operating Officer.

Further information on the Executive Board members can be found in Appendix A.

**Table 8** The MDBA staff per location at 30 June 2025

MDBA office location	First Nations Country	Number of staff
Adelaide	Kaurna	63
Canberra	Ngunnawal	234
Goondiwindi	Bigambul	4
Griffith	Wiradjuri	11
Mildura	Latji Latji	26
Murray Bridge	Ngarrindjeri	26
Albury	Wiradjuri	33
Dispersed		35
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>432</b>

# Corporate accountability

## MDBA Internal Governance Structures

The MDBA's Chief Executive is supported in their role as Accountable Authority by the Executive Board and its sub-committees (see Figure 19). At the MDBA, these governance committees play a key role in upholding our values and achieving our purpose by overseeing and managing risk, monitoring performance and providing a forum for consultation and reporting oversight.

The MDBA's governance committees support the MDBA in delivering on its purpose. They play key roles in overseeing and managing risk, monitoring performance, providing a forum for consultation and overseeing reporting. A strong governance framework defines responsibilities and ensures accountabilities. It supports effective decision-making, transparency, and assurance.

The Audit and Risk Committee provides independent advice on the appropriateness of financial and performance reporting, risk management and internal control mechanisms.

Further information on the Audit and Risk Committee can be found in Appendix B.

## Corporate governance practices

As a corporate Commonwealth entity, the MDBA is subject to the governance obligations under the PGPA Act, the PGPA Rule and associated Resource Management Guides (RMGs).

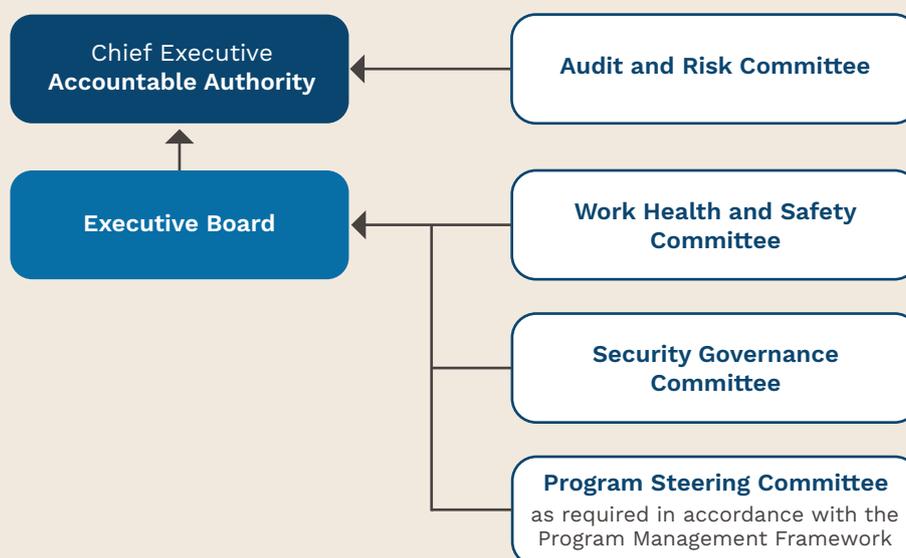
At the MDBA, a number of governance frameworks and supporting practices have been established, enabling us to meet objectives while managing risk and using public resources in a proper manner.

The MDBA Corporate Plan is the key planning document. It sets out how the MDBA will achieve its purpose through goals that have measurable targets. We report performance against those targets each year in the annual report.

Our Business Planning Framework and our Performance Reporting Framework enable individual staff and teams to set measurable objectives and manage performance and reporting.

The MDBA's ability to achieve its goals and respond to change relies on building organisational capability. The MDBA has an Enterprise Workforce Plan to help attract and retain the staff we need to deliver our outcomes. Division and branch level workplans have been developed to support the objectives of the broader enterprise-wide plan and help embed the changes needed to keep the MDBA moving forward.

Figure 19 The MDBA's Executive and committee structure



## Governance practices and risk management

### Risk management framework and policy

The MDBA maintains a strong governance and risk management framework that supports the achievement of our strategic objectives. Our Enterprise Risk Management Framework and Risk Appetite Statement are aligned with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy and ISO 31000:2018, providing a consistent and structured approach to managing risk across the agency.

The Risk Appetite Statement guides decision-making by defining where the MDBA is more open to risk – particularly in areas that promote innovation, operational improvement, and capability building. It also clearly outlines areas of low tolerance, such as work health and safety and regulatory compliance, and areas of zero tolerance, including fraud, corruption, and unethical conduct.

Identifying risks that could compromise our ability to deliver our objectives remains central to our approach.

We analyse sources of risk against the MDBA’s risk impact categories, including environment, culture,

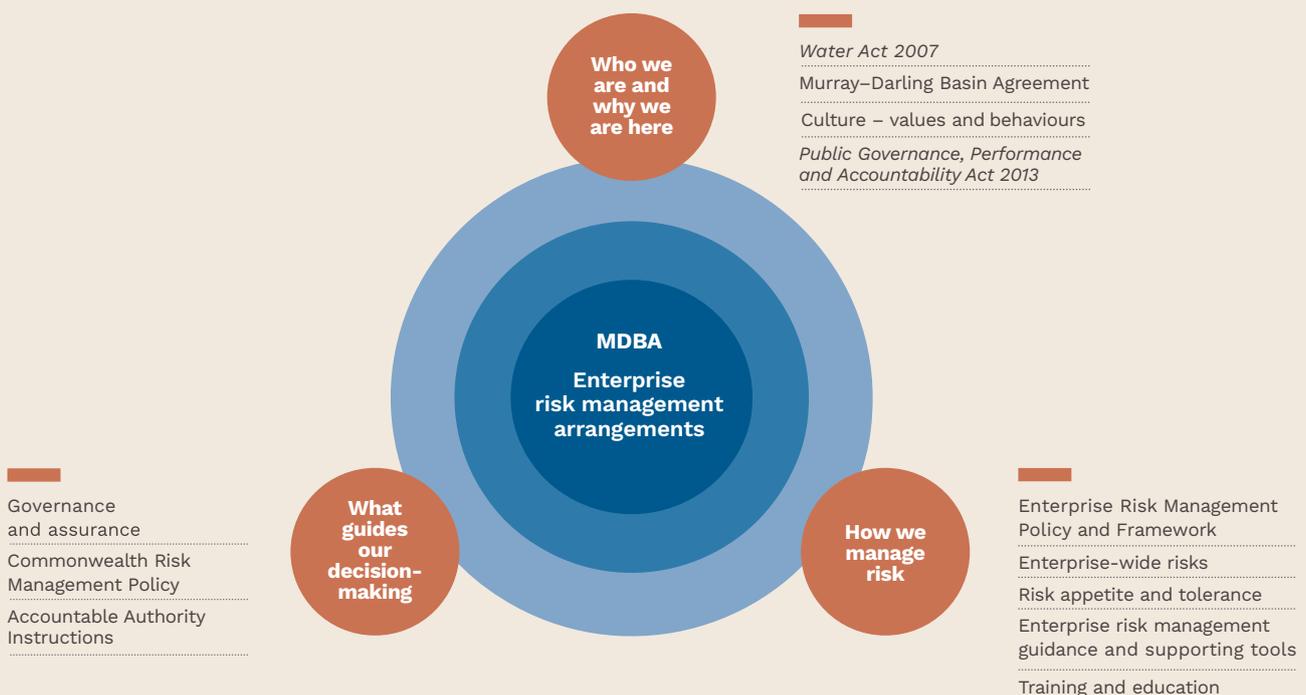
sustainability, and heritage. This ensures alignment with our objectives of delivering the Basin Plan and operating the Murray River systems for our partner governments. See the MDBA’s enterprise risk management arrangements at Figure 20.

This comprehensive approach enables informed resource allocation and supports a positive risk culture throughout the agency. It ensures that staff at all levels understand how their work contributes to managing risk and achieving MDBA objectives.

The MDBA’s internal control framework continues to operate effectively, with sound financial controls and assurance processes in place.

All new employees and contractors undertake training that includes APS integrity, fraud awareness, risk awareness and privacy. New staff are also required to address conflicts of interest and are made aware of the need to keep sensitive water market information confidential.

**Figure 20** The MDBA’s enterprise risk management arrangements



## **Comcover**

Comcover provides the MDBA's insurance cover. Insurable risks are identified and assessed annually through Comcover's insurance renewal process. The MDBA is separately insured by Comcare for workers' compensation for employees.

Comcover conducted a benchmarking survey during the reporting period, in accordance with a 2-yearly schedule. The Risk Management Benchmarking Program is a key part of Comcover's risk management services through the Comcover risk maturity model.

The 5 areas of focus for the risk maturity model are:

- risk governance
- risk culture
- risk capability
- risk management framework and practices
- organisational resilience and agility.

The MDBA performed well against each of the areas of focus. Our strongest capability is in risk management framework and practices.

## **Fraud and corruption control**

The MDBA has zero tolerance for fraud and corruption. All reasonable measures to prevent, detect, and deal with fraud and corruption are taken.

Our approach to fraud and corruption control resolves consistent with the Commonwealth Fraud and Corruption Control Framework, including the Fraud and Corruption Rule, which came into effect on 1 July 2024.

The MDBA prioritises prevention through awareness raising and training, and regularly reviews its fraud prevention and control measures, which include fraud and corruption risk assessment and the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Plan.

Information relating to the MDBA's engagement with fraud and corruption issues, including suspected fraud and corruption can be reported to the MDBA's Fraud and Corruption Control Officer at [FraudControlOfficer@mdba.gov.au](mailto:FraudControlOfficer@mdba.gov.au).

## **Business continuity and disaster recovery framework**

The MDBA's Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Framework ensures the agency is well-prepared to minimise the adverse impacts of unexpected events. The Framework is structured around 7 key documents that guide our response and recovery efforts, ensuring continuity of operations and protection of critical functions.

- Business Impact Analysis
- Business Continuity Plan
- Business Continuity Test Plan
- ICT Disaster Recovery Plan
- ICT Disaster Recovery Test Plan
- Critical Systems Assurance Check
- Pandemic Business Continuity Plan.

## **Internal audit**

Internal audit services were provided by an external provider in 2024–25. Internal audits were developed in consultation with senior management, having regard to the MDBA's enterprise risk profile and its operating environment.

During this financial year, the following internal audits were conducted:

- Dam Safety Management Review
- TechnologyOne Data Migration
- Workplace Health and Safety
- Corporate performance reporting.

The implementation of internal audit report recommendations is monitored by the Chief Operating Officer and the Audit and Risk Committee.

## Engaging with stakeholders

Engagement with Basin stakeholders is pivotal to the MDBA in meeting our purpose and achieving our key activities. During a year distinguished by legislative reform and reviews, clear and consistent communication with Basin communities has been essential to chart the path for extended delivery. The size and scale of this task cannot be understated as we engage with more than 1,000 stakeholder groups who have an interest in the implementation and outcomes of the Basin Plan and MDBA activities.

We approach engagement by fostering shared understanding between all of those with an interest in water management throughout the Basin. We build shared understanding by collecting and publishing evidence-based information about the Basin and by listening to the diverse perspectives of our stakeholders.

Science and knowledge provides the evidence base from which we operate from. New science and knowledge is constantly emerging and we utilise the best available peer-reviewed hydrological, environmental, social and economic sciences. We continually monitor and assess the health of the Basin and distribute information to stakeholders through various channels.

We also listen to many views, understanding that each stakeholder has their own particular perspective. Local communities are important, since they often understand their stretch of river better than anyone. Their local knowledge contributes to the knowledge base for water management in the Basin.

We recognise the knowledge of First Nations peoples, respecting their understanding of Country and cultural obligations to care for Country. Understanding the importance of these deep knowledge systems and their inclusion, where shared appropriately, improves outcomes for the Basin.

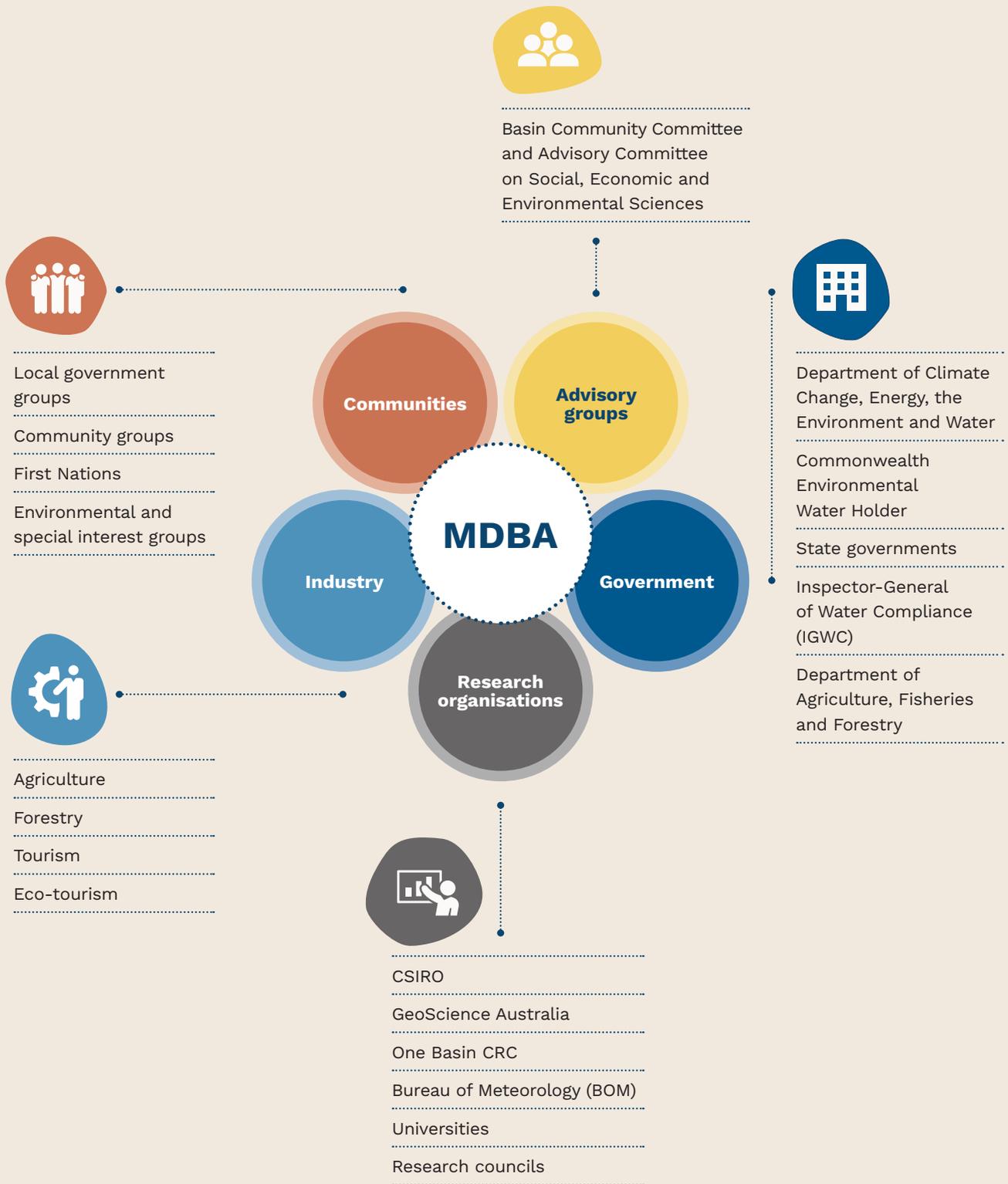
When making decisions, the MDBA endeavours to make our decision-making processes transparent to build confidence in the Basin Plan, RMO and the MDBA.

Figure 21 shows the MDBA's main collaborations and interdependencies. Key among them are:

- **Australian Government agencies** – we work with other agencies with roles under the Water Act, including DCCEE, the CEWH, the BoM, the IGWC and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.
- **Basin governments** – we work with the Australian Government and the governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory to coordinate work programs and oversee the implementation of the Basin Plan.
- **First Nations Peoples** – we engage with First Nations peoples across the Basin to ensure their perspectives are considered in the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of the Basin Plan. There are over 50 First Nations in the Basin.
- **Basin communities** – we work with Basin communities through advisory groups, community forums and our REOs as well as hosting and participating in conferences, field days and events.
- **Science and research communities** – we participate in research collaborations with universities and research organisations, including CSIRO, the BoM, La Trobe University and One Basin CRC.
- **Industry and special interest groups** – we have regular consultations and discussions with local government and special interest groups, including industry bodies for agriculture, forestry, tourism and environmental groups.

More information about the stakeholders we work with can be found on the [MDBA website](https://www.mdba.gov.au/about-us/who-we-work) [mdba.gov.au/about-us/who-we-work].

**Figure 21** The MDBA's collaboration network



## Champions support Regional Engagement Officers

To enhance engagement with communities across the Basin, we have established a network of REOs—8 in total—to bring insights from their local communities to the MDBA.

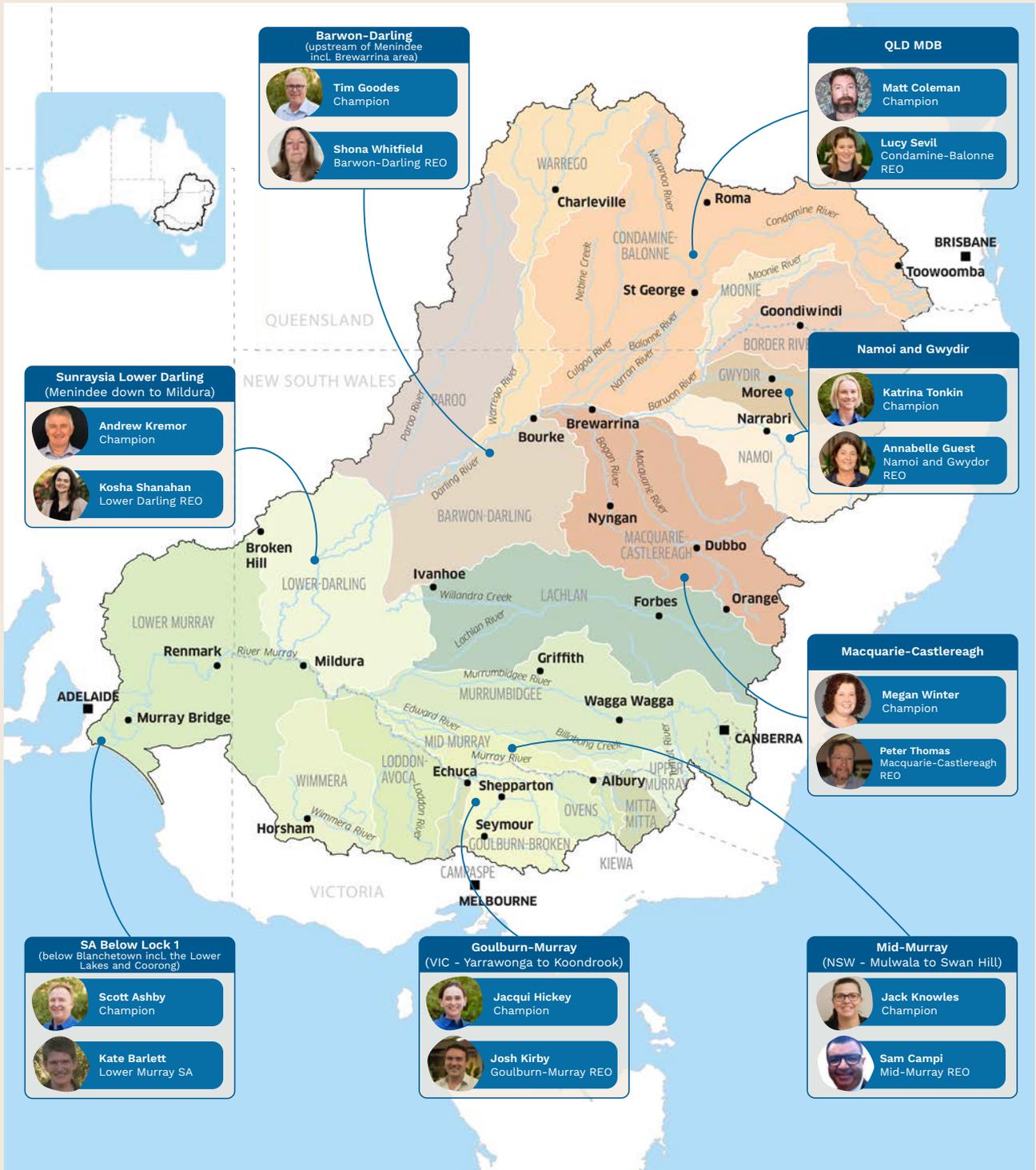
Our REOs are experienced individuals with strong local connections and valuable technical knowledge. They work directly with farmers, environmental and community groups, First Nations communities, local government and others in their area. They have improved the MDBA's ability to learn from and provide information to local communities.

To strengthen the influence of our regional network, the MDBA has paired each REO with a Champion from within the MDBA Senior Executive Service (see Figure 22).

The REO Program is undertaken in partnership with DCCEEW, which also provides one Australian Government Senior Executive Service partner for each REO. The combined approach strengthens and coordinates engagement with regions.



Figure 22 Prioritised areas of Champion support as at June 2025



## External scrutiny

The reporting requirements for corporate Commonwealth entities require the MDBA to report on significant developments in external scrutiny that occurred during the reporting period. This includes judicial decisions or decisions by administrative tribunals that have had or may have a significant effect on the MDBA's operations.

### Compliance reporting

It is a requirement of the PGPA Act that the MDBA reports significant non-compliance with finance law. Finance law includes:

- the PGPA Act
- the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (Cth)* (PGPA Rule)
- instruments made under the PGPA Act (including Accountable Authority Instructions) and the Appropriation Acts.

The compliance reporting process helps to identify and disclose instances of non-compliance with the PGPA framework, as a basis for continuous improvement.

There were no significant reportable breaches of the PGPA Act, the PGPA Rule or Australian Government policies in 2024–25.

### Judicial or administrative tribunal decisions

There were no judicial decisions or decisions of administrative tribunals to report during 2024–25.

### Auditor-General reports

The MDBA's financial statements are audited by the Auditor-General.

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) published a report on the MDBA's compliance with Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Requirements during 2024–25, which is available on the [ANAO website](https://www.anao.gov.au) [anao.gov.au].

### Parliamentary committee reports

There were no reports by parliamentary committees to report during 2024–25.

### Commonwealth Ombudsman reports

There were no reports by the Commonwealth Ombudsman to report during 2024–25.

### Office of the Australian Information Commissioner reports

There were no reports by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner to report during 2024–25.

### Capability reviews

There were no capability reviews to report during 2024–25.

## Ministerial directions and government policy orders

Under the PGPA Rule, the MDBA is required to report on any ministerial directions which are given under an Act or instrument. The MDBA did not receive any new ministerial directions in 2024–25.

In accordance with the PGPA Act, the MDBA must also report on any government policy orders that applied to it during the reporting period. The MDBA was not subject to any government policy orders during 2024–25.

On 2 December 2024, the MDBA received a Statement of Expectations, from the then Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, on 2 December 2024. This outlined the Minister's expectations for the MDBA's organisational performance as it relates to achieving regulatory objectives, carrying out regulatory functions and exercising the MDBA's powers.

More information about the Minister's Statement of Expectations is available on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/ministerial-statement-expectations-murray-darling-basin-0) [mdba.gov.au/publications-and-data/publications/ministerial-statement-expectations-murray-darling-basin-0].

## Freedom of information

Agencies subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) are required to publish information under the Information Publication Scheme (IPS).

The MDBA maintains a disclosure log and complies with the obligation to publish a range of information on its website as part of the IPS. More information about the IPS agency plan can be found on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/about-us/accountability-and-reporting/requesting-our-information/information-publication-scheme) [mdba.gov.au/about-us/accountability-and-reporting/requesting-our-information/information-publication-scheme].

## Advertising and market research

Under section 17AH of the PGPA Rule, the MDBA must report on any advertising and market research undertaken during the financial year above the threshold set out in section 311A of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Cth).

Advertising costs incurred by the MDBA during the reporting period are provided in Table 9.

**Table 9** Advertising costs incurred by the MDBA from July 2024 – June 2025

Advertising	Objective	Dates	Expenditure \$ (ex. GST)
<b>ORIMA</b>	The MDBA measures its effectiveness by conducting market research every 3 years.	June 2024 – December 2024	\$446,809.20
<b>River Reflections 2025 – Murray Bridge</b>	To raise awareness and boost ticket sales for the 2025 event, which brings together people with diverse knowledge of the Basin to share insights and learn from one another.	28 May 2024 – 30 June 2025	\$13,635.95



## Ecological sustainability and environmental performance

The MDBA is required to report annually on the environmental performance of our operations, in accordance with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth).

Ecological sustainability is at the core of the MDBA's activities, as specified in the Water Act. We adhere to the 5 principles of ecological sustainability:

- **the integration principle** – decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations.
- **the precautionary principle** – if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- **the intergenerational principle** – the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.
- **the biodiversity principle** – the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making.
- **the valuation principle** – improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted.

Examples of how we meet these requirements and principles include:

- implementing the Basin Plan
- undertaking the Basin Plan Review to see how sustainability can be further enhanced
- developing annual environmental watering priorities
- working to improve the health of the River Murray system.

In 2024–25 the MDBA continued reducing its environmental impact by saving energy, minimising waste, saving water and reducing travel emissions, as shown in Table 10.

**Table 10** MDBA initiatives to minimise environmental impact

Theme	MDBA initiatives to minimise environmental impact
<b>Saving energy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy efficiency included as a factor in procurement decisions when whitegoods and ICT equipment were purchased.</li> <li>• To reduce energy consumption in our offices, we have installed LED lighting with motion sensors and energy-efficient window blinds.</li> <li>• Centralised multi-function devices are available instead of less efficient desktop printers.</li> <li>• Heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems are set to energy-saving temperatures.</li> <li>• Regional offices (where applicable) undergo a desktop assessment to determine a NABERS Energy Tenancy ratings.</li> </ul>
<b>Minimising waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We adopt a circular economy approach to minimise our use of resources.</li> <li>• Environmentally sustainable and recyclable materials are used where possible.</li> <li>• All our offices maintain segregated waste streams to reduce landfill contributions. Where services are available, we provide separate bins for general waste, e-waste, organic waste, comingled recycling and paper/cardboard.</li> <li>• Toner cartridges are recycled.</li> <li>• ICT equipment is repurposed where appropriate.</li> <li>• Our offices have swipe-to-print default printing settings, and we have electronic document management with collaboration capabilities available to reduce the need for printing.</li> <li>• Office consumables are made from renewable resources and manufactured under environmental management systems that support responsible forestry stewardship where possible.</li> <li>• Worn and damaged uniform items have been repurposed and used to make compressed packaging materials keeping them out of landfill.</li> <li>• Where commercial waste management companies provide fewer services, we have supported staff-led recycling initiatives at our offices.</li> </ul>
<b>Saving water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To help lessen reliance on local water supplies we have:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaborated with building managers and landlords of MDBA offices to install low-flow shower heads, sensor-operated taps in bathrooms and low flow taps in kitchen areas where feasible.</li> <li>• installed dual-flush toilets across our offices.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Reducing travel emissions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff across all offices have access to video conferencing software to support online meetings whenever possible.</li> <li>• We continue to discourage non-essential travel and encourage staff to book direct flights when travel is necessary subject to the 'lowest practical fare' guidance.</li> <li>• In alignment with Commonwealth Fleet Vehicle Selection Policy, all new and replacement vehicles are assessed at the end of their lease to determine whether they can be replaced with a low-emission vehicle where suitable for their intended purpose.</li> <li>• We encourage cycling to work for Canberra and Adelaide-based staff by providing a secured bike storage area, including end of trip facilities.</li> </ul>

## APS Net Zero by 2030

As part of the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy, we are required to report on operational greenhouse gas emissions.

APS Net Zero 2030 is the Australian Government’s policy for the APS to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2030 and transparently report on its emissions. As part of the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy, we are required to report on operational greenhouse gas emissions.

The Greenhouse Gas emissions inventory presents greenhouse gas emissions over the 2024–25 period. Results are presented based on Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>-e) emissions. Greenhouse gas emissions have been calculated in line with the APS Net Zero Emissions Reporting Framework, consistent with the Whole-of-Australian Government approach as part of the APS Net Zero 2030 policy. Not all data sources were available at the time of the report and amendments to data may be required in future reports.

We have estimated our emissions in accordance with the Whole-of-Australian Government approach in Tables 11 and 12. Table 11 uses the location-based

method, while Table 12 sets out greenhouse gas emissions when applying the market-based method, which accounts for activities such as Greenpower, any large-scale generation certificates purchased and being located in the ACT.

Data sources not included in these estimates are:

- Electricity consumption data for our Wodonga, Albury, and Adelaide offices due to the inability to isolate MDBA data from other tenants in these shared buildings.
- Solid waste due to data not being available at the time of this report.
- Emissions for hire cars for the reporting period due to a lack of robust and complete data from third party providers.

The quality of data is expected to improve over time as emissions reporting matures.

**Table 11** Greenhouse gas emissions Inventory, location-based method, 2024–25

Emission Source	Scope 1 t CO <sub>2</sub> -e	Scope 2 t CO <sub>2</sub> -e	Scope 3 t CO <sub>2</sub> -e	Total t CO <sub>2</sub> -e
Electricity (Location Based Approach)	N/A	138.92	10.40	149.32
Natural gas	-	N/A	-	-
Solid waste*	-	N/A	-	-
Refrigerants*	-	N/A	N/A	-
Fleet and other vehicles	19.32	N/A	4.75	24.07
Domestic commercial flights	N/A	N/A	418.86	418.86
Domestic hire car*	N/A	N/A	37.42	37.42
Domestic travel accommodation*	N/A	N/A	144.73	144.73
Other energy	-	N/A	-	-
<b>Total t CO<sub>2</sub>-e</b>	<b>19.32</b>	<b>138.92</b>	<b>616.16</b>	<b>774.40</b>

**Notes:** The table above presents emissions related to electricity usage using the location-based accounting method. CO<sub>2</sub>-e = Carbon Dioxide Equivalent. N/A = not applicable.

\*Reporting on refrigerants is being phased in over time as emissions reporting matures and may be an optional source in the 2024–25 emissions reporting. For more details, see the [Emissions Reporting Framework](https://www.finance.gov.au/node/6119) [finance.gov.au/node/6119].

**Table 12** Greenhouse gas emissions, carbon dioxide equivalent, market-based method, 2024–25

Emission Source	Scope 2 t CO <sub>2</sub> -e	Scope 3 t CO <sub>2</sub> -e	Total t CO <sub>2</sub> -e	Percentage of electricity use
Electricity (Location Based Approach)	138.92	10.40	149.32	219,766.31
Market-based electricity emissions	46.02	6.25	52.26	56,808.97
<b>Total renewable electricity consumed</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>162,957.35</b>
<i>Renewable Power Percentage</i> <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	39,986.48
<i>Jurisdictional Renewable Power Percentage</i> <sup>2,3</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	122,970.87
<i>GreenPower</i> <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	-
<i>Large-scale generation certificates</i> <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	-
<i>Behind the meter solar</i> <sup>4</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	-
<b>Total renewable electricity produced</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>-</b>
<i>Large-scale generation certificates</i> <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	-
<i>Behind the meter solar</i> <sup>4</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	-

**Notes:** The table above presents emissions related to electricity usage using both the location-based and the market-based accounting methods. CO<sub>2</sub>-e = Carbon Dioxide Equivalent. Electricity usage is measured in kilowatt hours (kWh).

<sup>1</sup> Listed as Mandatory renewables in 2023–24 Annual Reports. The renewable power percentage (RPP) accounts for the portion of electricity used, from the grid, that falls within the Renewable Energy Target (RET).

<sup>2</sup> Listed as Voluntary renewables in 2023–24 Annual Reports.

<sup>3</sup> The Australian Capital Territory is currently the only state with a jurisdictional renewable power percentage (JRPP).

<sup>4</sup> Reporting behind the meter solar consumption and/or production is optional. The quality of data is expected to improve over time as emissions reporting matures.



# People and culture

## Our people

At the MDBA our people are critical to the successful delivery of our O&Os and to ensuring we achieve our ambitions and goals. We have an ongoing need for skilled and talented people working together across all areas of our organisation.

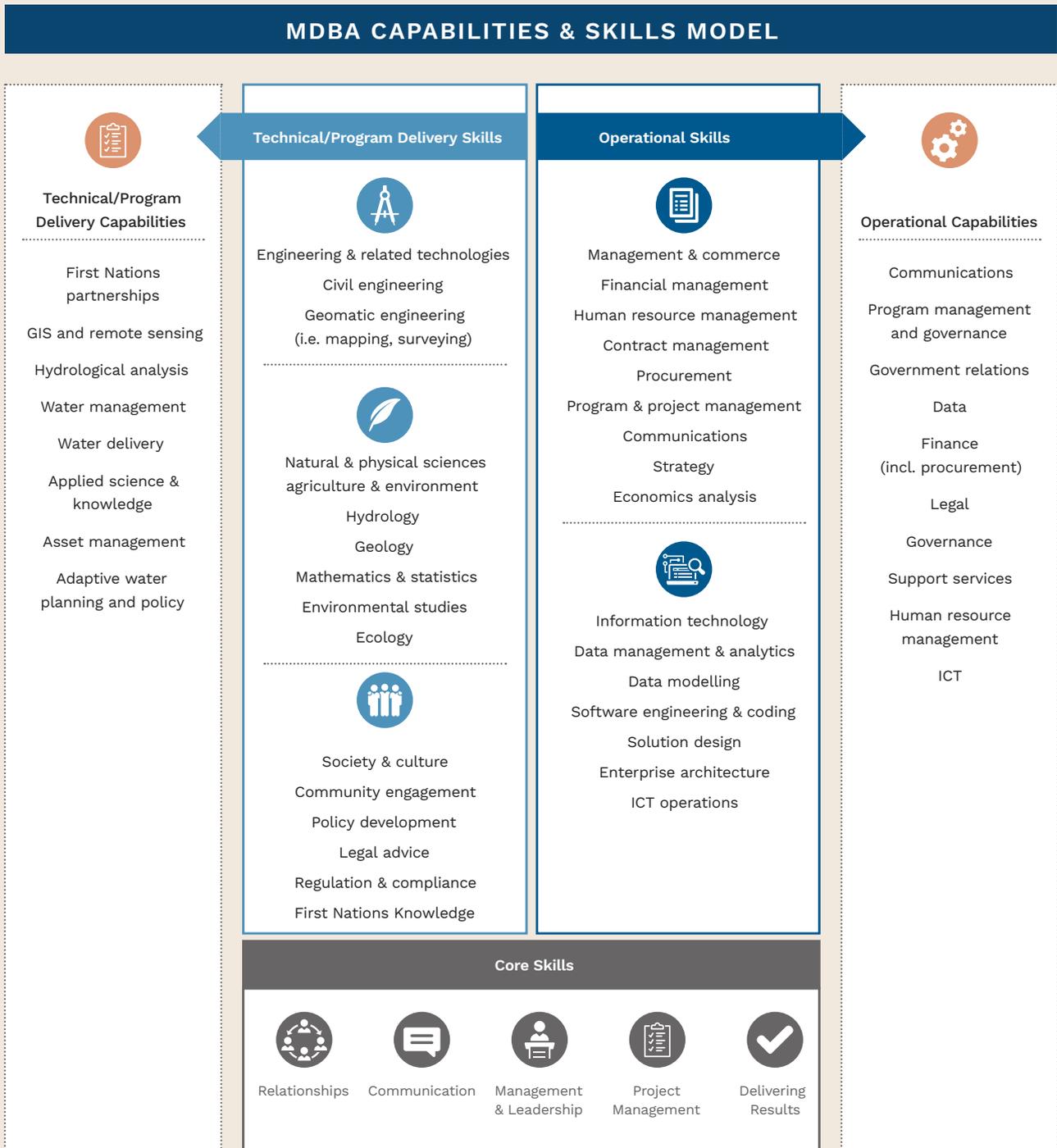
The Capability and Skills model for the MDBA at Figure 23 sets out the wide range of skills and expertise needed by the agency. The MDBA workforce includes

highly specialised people with expertise in a range of areas such as hydrology, environmental science, engineering, modelling and project management, as well as law, policy, social science and communication.

We continue to build on the different elements of our Enterprise Workforce Plan to help us attract and retain the people we need now and into the future.



Figure 23 The MDBA workforce capabilities and skills



## People and culture

In 2024–25, the MDBA continued to champion a workplace culture that empowers our people to deliver on the MDBA’s purpose—*Rivers, for generations*. Our efforts were guided by the MDBA People Strategy 2021–2026 (Figure 24), with a strong focus on leadership development, workforce capability, and employee engagement.

Our workforce continues to be the key to delivering the MDBA’s purpose and vision. This year we have built on the different elements of the MDBA Enterprise Workforce Plan 2023–2027 to help us ensure we attract and retain the staff we need to deliver our outcomes and achieve our goals.

We have maintained our focus on developing our people. We have continued to invest in targeted development at all levels. Leading with Purpose, our flagship program for Executive Level 1 and 2 staff, fosters a unified leadership culture and supports strategic thinking, collaboration, and growth. For APS Level 1 to 6 staff, we have continued our Chords program, which focuses on building foundational skills, supporting career progression, and promoting continuous improvement.

This investment will ensure we have the skills and attributes needed to guide the MDBA into the future and provide a strong foundation for embedding our purpose and values throughout the whole organisation.

### APS Strategic Commissioning Framework

The MDBA operates in line with the Strategic Commissioning Framework. Core work is done in-house in most cases, and any outsourcing of core work is minimal and aligns with the limited circumstances permitted under the framework. Over the past 12 months, the MDBA has transitioned selected roles to internal delivery, reinforcing our commitment to strategic commissioning principles.

Our targets for 2024–25 aimed to bring core work in-house. This target has been partially achieved, with 56% of the goal met through a reduction in relevant supplier expenditure.

Figure 24 The MDBA’s People Strategy 2021–2026



## Ethical standards

The MDBA is committed to effective and transparent governance. We rely on public confidence in the integrity of the agency to deliver our activities and functions. As an Australian Government agency, these values are underpinned by the APS values:

- stewardship
- impartial
- committed to service
- accountable
- respectful
- ethical.

Our staff are required to complete an annual refresher program, a self-paced training module that reminds them of the requirements and responsibilities of working in the APS.

Standards and behaviours are set out in the APS Code of Conduct in section 13 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth). The MDBA supplements this with policies that support ethical standards, including:

- Accountable Authority Instructions
- Procedures for determining APS Code of Conduct breaches
- MDBA Declaration of Interest Policy 2024–2026
- Conflict of interest guidance for Authority members
- MDBA policy for managing Sensitive Water Market Information 2024–2026
- Fraud Control Plan and Policy.



## Work health and safety

Work health and safety remains a core priority at the MDBA.

Work health and safety initiatives delivered in 2024–25 included:

- regular workplace inspections and risk assessments
- review of the work health and safety risks across the agency
- implementing key internal audit recommendations, including enhanced office induction procedures and evacuation plans
- reviewing and updating WHS policies
- promotion of R U OK? Day in September and Safe Work month in October
- early intervention services to prevent and mitigate chronic injuries or illnesses developing
- implementation of a Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- ongoing support and training for First Aid Officers and Mental Health First Aid Officers
- regular engagement with Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs)
- delivery of the annual flu vaccination program and targeted health support for staff in regions impacted by Japanese encephalitis
- workstation assessment (including home-based) by qualified occupational therapists
- rehabilitation support
- confidential support services for employees and eligible family members through the Employee Assistance Program
- an annual health and wellbeing allowance
- activities for the annual Health and Wellbeing Week
- wellbeing program of mental, emotional and physical awareness presentations by the Employee Assistance Program.

There were 21 reported work health and safety incidents in 2024–25. No new Comcare claims were approved (see Tables 13 and 14).

**Table 13** The MDBA health and safety statistics, 2018–19 to 2024–25

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
<b>Internal reports on workplace hazards and incidents</b>	12	7	1	2	11	9	21
<b>Lost time caused by incidents and injuries not reported to Comcare (staff days)</b>	2.5	0	0	0	14	0	0
<b>Lost time caused by incidents and injuries reported to Comcare (staff days)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Incidents reported to Comcare</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 14** The MDBA Comcare claims and premiums, 2018–19 to 2024–25

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
<b>Number of new claims</b>	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Total cost of new claims (\$)</b>	0	0	0	7,334	0	0	0
<b>Average cost of new claims (\$)</b>	0	0	0	7,334	0	0	0
<b>Comcare premium (\$)</b>	357,142	116,181	87,435	75,860	95,830	124,401	132,934

## Workplace Health and Safety Committee

The Workplace Health and Safety Committee is a consultative committee, established consistent with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) to assist the MDBA ensure health and safety for MDBA employees at work. The committee assists with the development of policies and procedures relating to health and safety and coordinating activities for special events, including the annual Health and Wellbeing Week.

The Committee meets 4 times each year.

- Membership comprises:
- Chair – General Counsel
- Deputy Chair – Director, People and Culture
- Management representatives
- Health and Safety representatives – Canberra
- Health and Safety representatives – regional offices.

### Employee arrangements

As at 30 June 2025, the MDBA had 432 staff: 387 ongoing and 45 non-ongoing (see Tables 15 and 16).

Staff are employed under the MDBA Enterprise Agreement 2024–2027. In accordance with the terms of the agreement, MDBA employees received a 3.8% pay increase on 13 March 2025.

### Employee Consultative Committee

The Employee Consultative Committee (ECC) is established under Clause 412 of the MDBA Enterprise Agreement 2024–2027 to facilitate communication, consultation and cooperation with employees on matters affecting the workplace and the operation of the agreement.

The ECC provides a forum for involving staff in the decision-making for changes to existing policies, guidelines, or procedures, and the development of new ones, as well as providing advice to the Chief Executive on matters relating to the agreement.

The Committee members are:

- the Chief Executive (Chair)
- management representatives
- portfolio representatives
- regional representatives
- employee representatives from the relevant unions.



**Table 15** The MDBA ongoing employees, 2024–25

	Man/Male			Woman/Female			Non-Binary			Uses a different term			Not recorded			Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	
<b>NSW</b>	11	3	<b>14</b>	28	6	<b>34</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>48</b>
<b>QLD</b>	2	-	<b>2</b>	3	1	<b>4</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>6</b>
<b>SA</b>	29	4	<b>33</b>	36	13	<b>49</b>	-	-	-	1	-	<b>1</b>	-	-	-	<b>83</b>
<b>TAS</b>	1	-	<b>1</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
<b>VIC</b>	15	1	<b>16</b>	20	-	<b>20</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>36</b>
<b>WA</b>	-	-	-	-	1	<b>1</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
<b>ACT</b>	90	5	<b>95</b>	98	18	<b>116</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>211</b>
<b>NT</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>0</b>
<b>External Territories</b>	-	-	-	1	-	<b>1</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
<b>Overseas</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>387</b>

**Table 16** The MDBA non-ongoing employees, 2024–25

	Man/Male			Woman/Female			Non-Binary			Uses a different term			Not recorded			Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	
NSW	4	-	4	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
QLD	1	-	1	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
SA	2	-	2	4	2	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
TAS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
VIC	1	1	2	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
WA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
ACT	8	1	9	13	1	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23
NT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
External Territories	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Overseas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>



# *Part 4*

## Financial statements

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# Chief Financial Officer's report

## Financial performance

For 2024–25 the MDBA reported a total comprehensive loss attributable to the Australian Government of \$7.6 million (2023–24: loss of \$17.8 million) compared to a budgeted operating loss of \$17.7 million. Consistent with the previous year, the loss was funded from prior year revenues.

Key activities that utilised accumulated unspent funds in 2024–25 include:

- Continued milestone achievements under the South Australia Riverland Floodplain Integrated Infrastructure Project (SARFIIP).
- Expenditure on projects funded under Memorandums of Understanding, including the Murray–Darling Water and Environment Research Program, as well as the Hydrometric Network and Remote Sensing Program which completed during the year.

These drawdowns on prior year revenues are partially offset by other programs which saw an increase in accumulated funding. This includes the delivery of activities under the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement (MDB Agreement), of which a portion of the funding will be carried over into the 2025–26 financial year to complete projects in progress.

The difference between the actual and budgeted operating loss was primarily due to increased other revenue, including:

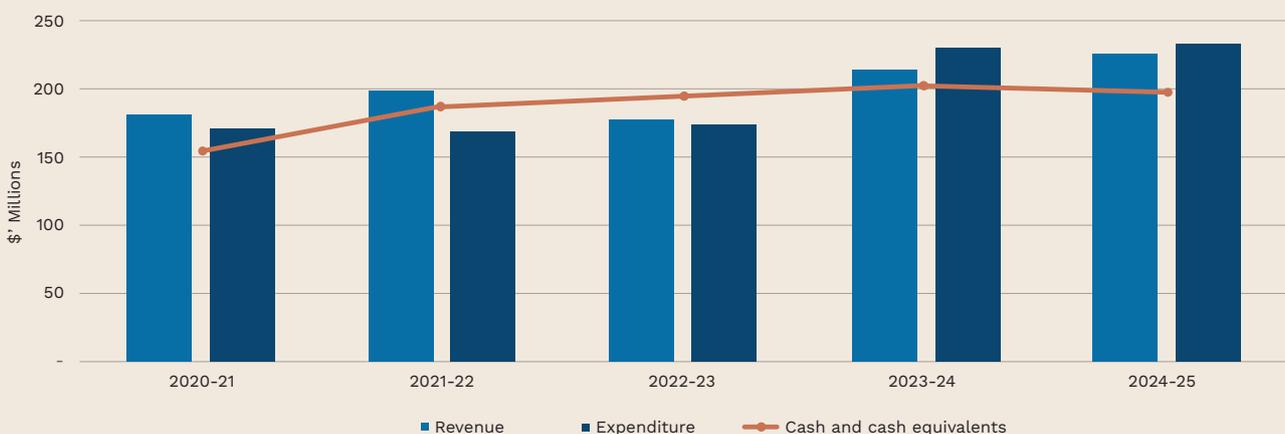
- Higher than projected interest revenues driven by a higher than expected cash balance.
- Increased royalties from hydropower generation, as relates to activities under the MDB Agreement.
- Higher than anticipated revenues under Memorandums of Understanding, including the Enhanced Environmental Water Delivery project.

The MDBA's cash and cash equivalents balance continues to include funds held for specific purposes. Cash attributable to these programs of work is not available to the MDBA to fund its broader priorities.

Based on the key assumptions of continued appropriation funding from government and contributions from jurisdictions as our primary funding sources, MDBA continues to operate with sufficient cash reserves to fund our liabilities and commitments as and when they fall due.

Figure 25 outlines revenue, expenditure and cash balance trends over the past 5 years.

**Figure 25** The MDBA's revenue, expenditure and cash balance trends, 2020–21 to 2024–25



## Revenue

The MDBA's 2024-25 key revenues continue to include:

- Revenue from Government totalling \$85.8 million (2023-24: \$87.9 million). This is primarily made up of revenue for Basin Plan related activities and includes revenue received to prepare for and undertake the first statutory review of the Basin Plan.
- Contributions from jurisdictions of \$104.5 million (2023-24: \$102.9 million). These revenues fund the MDB Agreement functions, as include River Murray operations and natural resource management programs (the Joint Programs).

Contributions from jurisdictions continue to be the MDBA's main revenue source. These contributions are based on agreed principles, ensuring that contributions by each original party is based on the objective of delivering benefits to the Basin as a whole, rather than a particular state. These contributions are based on a work plan and associated budget approved by the Ministerial Council.

Figure 26 shows revenue trends over the past 5 years.

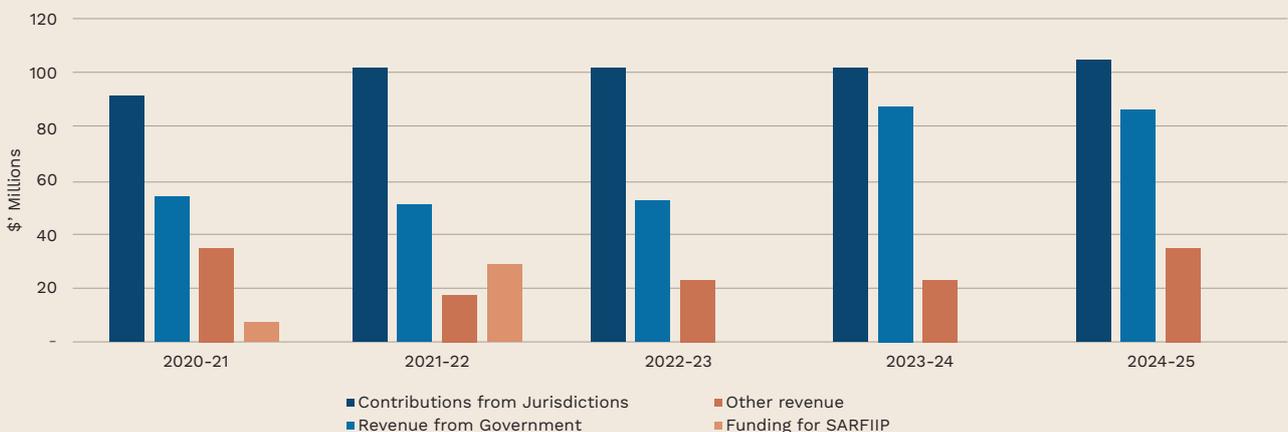
## Expenditure

The MDBA's total expenditure for 2024-25 was \$233.7 million (2023-24: \$231.6 million). Expenditure for 2024-25 was largely consistent with the previous year, noting:

- Employee costs increased following a larger average staffing base to deliver on various programs, including the statutory review of the Basin Plan. This increase was largely offset by a reduction in consultant and contractor expenses.
- Approximately half of MDBA's supplier expenditure consists of spend relating to the construction, operations and maintenance of RMO assets, carried out by the State Constructing Authorities. This spend decreased in 2024-25, noting unspent funds can be subject to being carried forward into the next financial year to address delays in investigations, construction and planned maintenance activities.

The MDBA manage River Murray operations on behalf of the partner governments under the MDB Agreement. The River Murray assets are owned by the Australian Government, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia under a joint venture arrangement. These assets do not form part of the MDBA general purpose financial statements.

**Figure 26** The MDBA's revenue trends, 2020-21 to 2024-25



# Independent auditor's report



## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Minister for the Environment and Water

### Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (the Entity) for the year ended 30 June 2025:

- (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*; and
- (b) present fairly the financial position of the Entity as at 30 June 2025 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

The financial statements of the Entity, which I have audited, comprise the following as at 30 June 2025 and for the year then ended:

- Statement by the Accountable Authority and Chief Finance Officer;
- Statement of Comprehensive Income;
- Statement of Financial Position;
- Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Cash Flow Statement; and
- Notes to the financial statements, comprising material accounting policy information and other explanatory information.

### Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Entity in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements for financial statement audits conducted by the Auditor-General and their delegates. These include the relevant independence requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) to the extent that they are not in conflict with the *Auditor-General Act 1997*. I have also fulfilled my other responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

### Accountable Authority's responsibility for the financial statements

As the Accountable Authority of the Entity, the Chief Executive is responsible under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the Act) for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the rules made under the Act. The Chief Executive is also responsible for such internal control as the Chief Executive determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Chief Executive is responsible for assessing the ability of the Entity to continue as a going concern, taking into account whether the Entity's operations will cease as a result of an administrative restructure or for any other reason. The Chief Executive is also responsible for disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the assessment indicates that it is not appropriate.

GPO Box 707, Canberra ACT 2601  
38 Sydney Avenue, Forrest ACT 2603  
Phone (02) 6203 7300

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

My objective is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control;
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Entity's internal control;
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Accountable Authority;
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Accountable Authority's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern; and
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Accountable Authority regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Australian National Audit Office



Naveed Nisar  
Audit Principal  
Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra  
24 September 2025

# Financial statements

## **Murray–Darling Basin Authority Statement by the Accountable Authority and Chief Financial Officer**

for the period ended 30 June 2025

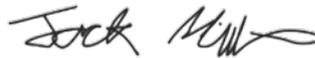
In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2025 comply with subsection 42(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), and are based on properly maintained financial records as per subsection 41(2) of the PGPA Act.

In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Murray–Darling Basin Authority will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.



**Jacqui Hickey,**  
A/g Chief Executive

24 September 2025



**Jack Mills,**  
Chief Financial Officer

24 September 2025

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

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## Murray–Darling Basin Authority Statement of Comprehensive Income

for the period ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>				
<b>Expenses</b>				
Employee benefits	1.1A	64,193	53,770	57,360
Suppliers	1.1B	140,464	148,574	148,011
Grants	1.1C	22,236	22,192	19,572
Depreciation and amortisation	2.2	6,518	5,740	5,140
Write-down and impairment of assets	1.1D	106	1,101	-
Finance costs	1.1E	196	195	140
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>233,713</b>	<b>231,572</b>	<b>230,223</b>
<b>Own-source revenue</b>				
Contributions from jurisdictions	1.2A	104,514	102,906	109,232
Interest		10,634	9,752	6,245
Other revenue	1.2B	24,792	13,109	12,305
<b>Total own-source revenue</b>		<b>139,940</b>	<b>125,767</b>	<b>127,782</b>
<b>Total own-source income</b>		<b>139,940</b>	<b>125,767</b>	<b>127,782</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>		<b>(93,773)</b>	<b>(105,805)</b>	<b>(102,441)</b>
Revenue from Government	1.2C	85,825	87,880	84,670
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) attributable to the Australian Government</b>		<b>(7,948)</b>	<b>(17,925)</b>	<b>(17,771)</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>				
Changes in the asset revaluation reserve		306	165	85
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss) attributable to the Australian Government</b>		<b>(7,642)</b>	<b>(17,760)</b>	<b>(17,686)</b>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

### Budget Variance Commentary

Budget variance explanations are outlined in Note 6. The Original Budget amounts have been adjusted so as to be consistent with the financial statements classification.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Statement of Financial Position

as at 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
<b>ASSETS</b>				
<b>Financial assets</b>				
Cash and cash equivalents	2.1A	197,184	202,791	156,349
Trade and other receivables	2.1B	8,939	7,574	13,348
<b>Total financial assets</b>		<b>206,123</b>	<b>210,365</b>	<b>169,697</b>
<b>Non-financial assets<sup>1</sup></b>				
Buildings	2.2	6,442	8,748	11,446
Property, plant and equipment	2.2	2,665	1,462	2,520
Intangibles	2.2	7,175	8,698	11,049
Prepayments		1,634	998	635
<b>Total non-financial assets</b>		<b>17,916</b>	<b>19,906</b>	<b>25,650</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>224,039</b>	<b>230,271</b>	<b>195,347</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
<b>Payables</b>				
Suppliers	2.3A	21,250	27,543	11,540
Grants	2.3B	8,644	2,342	-
Other payables	2.3C	2,705	2,311	1,336
<b>Total payables</b>		<b>32,599</b>	<b>32,196</b>	<b>12,876</b>
<b>Interest bearing liabilities</b>				
Lease liabilities	2.4	5,311	6,863	9,689
<b>Total interest bearing liabilities</b>		<b>5,311</b>	<b>6,863</b>	<b>9,689</b>
<b>Provisions</b>				
Employee provisions	3.1	15,878	13,387	16,372
Other provisions	2.5	1,788	1,720	1,020
<b>Total provisions</b>		<b>17,666</b>	<b>15,107</b>	<b>17,392</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>55,576</b>	<b>54,166</b>	<b>39,957</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>168,463</b>	<b>176,105</b>	<b>155,390</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>				
Contributed equity		25,175	25,175	25,175
Reserves		64,869	66,689	61,607
Retained surplus		78,419	84,241	68,608
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>168,463</b>	<b>176,105</b>	<b>155,390</b>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

<sup>1</sup> Right-of-use assets are included in the line items: Buildings and Property, plant and equipment.

### Budget Variance Commentary

Budget variance explanations are outlined in Note 6. The Original Budget amounts have been adjusted so as to be consistent with the financial statements classification.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority Statement of Changes in Equity

for the period ended 30 June 2025

	Contributed Equity \$'000	Retained Earnings \$'000	Reserves		Total \$'000
			Specific Purpose Funds Reserve <sup>1</sup> \$'000	Asset Revaluation Reserve \$'000	
<b>Balance at 1 July 2023</b>	<b>15,177</b>	<b>82,083</b>	<b>86,196</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>183,867</b>
<b>Comprehensive income</b>					
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	-	(17,925)	-	-	(17,925)
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(17,925)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(17,925)</b>
<b>Transaction with owners</b>					
Contribution by owners					
Equity injection	9,998	-	-	-	9,998
<b>Total transaction with owners</b>	<b>9,998</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,998</b>
<b>Transfer in/out reserves</b>					
Transfer from/(to) Specific Purpose Funds Reserve	-	20,083	(20,083)	-	-
Transfer from/(to) Asset Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-	165	165
<b>Total transfer in/(out) reserves</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20,083</b>	<b>(20,083)</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2024</b>	<b>25,175</b>	<b>84,241</b>	<b>66,113</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>176,105</b>
<b>Comprehensive income</b>					
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	-	(7,948)	-	-	(7,948)
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(7,948)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(7,948)</b>
<b>Transaction with owners</b>					
Contribution by owners					
Equity injection	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total transaction with owners</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Transfer in/out reserves</b>					
Transfer from/(to) Specific Purpose Funds Reserve	-	2,126	(2,126)	-	-
Transfer from/(to) Asset Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-	306	306
<b>Total transfer in/(out) reserves</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,126</b>	<b>(2,126)</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2025</b>	<b>25,175</b>	<b>78,419</b>	<b>63,987</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>168,463</b>
Original Budget	25,175	68,608	61,196	411	155,390

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

<sup>1</sup> In 2022–23, the Authority established the Specific Purpose Funds Reserve in order to provide disclosure for the funding received but not expensed for the Joint Programs and various Memorandums of Understanding. Please refer to the Overview note for further details.

## Accounting Policy

### Equity injections

Amounts appropriated which are designated as 'equity injections' for a year (less any formal reductions) and Departmental Capital Budgets (DCBs) are recognised directly in contributed equity in that year.

## Budget Variance Commentary

Budget variance explanations are outlined in Note 6. The Original Budget amounts have been adjusted so as to be consistent with the financial statements classification.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Statement of Cash Flow

for the period ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>				
<b>Cash received</b>				
Receipts from Government		85,825	87,880	84,670
Contributions from jurisdictions		104,514	103,125	109,232
Interest		10,099	9,049	6,245
Net GST received		16,104	12,271	12,320
Other		20,398	23,246	14,008
<b>Total cash received</b>		<b>236,940</b>	<b>235,571</b>	<b>226,475</b>
<b>Cash used</b>				
Employees		60,841	52,152	53,212
Suppliers		160,411	160,260	174,873
Interest payments on lease liabilities		127	157	108
Grants		15,934	21,082	19,572
<b>Total cash used</b>		<b>237,313</b>	<b>233,651</b>	<b>247,765</b>
<b>Net cash from/(used by) operating activities</b>		<b>(373)</b>	<b>1,920</b>	<b>(21,290)</b>
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>				
<b>Cash used</b>				
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		1,905	576	1,057
Purchase of intangible assets		697	1,391	-
<b>Total cash used</b>		<b>2,602</b>	<b>1,967</b>	<b>1,057</b>
<b>Net cash from/(used by) investing activities</b>		<b>(2,602)</b>	<b>(1,967)</b>	<b>(1,057)</b>
<b>FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>				
<b>Cash received</b>				
Contributed equity		-	9,998	-
<b>Total cash received</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>9,998</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash used</b>				
Principal payments of lease liabilities		2,632	2,473	2,095
<b>Net cash used</b>		<b>2,632</b>	<b>2,473</b>	<b>2,095</b>
<b>Net cash from/(used by) financing activities</b>		<b>(2,632)</b>	<b>7,525</b>	<b>(2,095)</b>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash held</b>		<b>(5,607)</b>	<b>7,478</b>	<b>(24,442)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		202,791	195,313	180,791
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period</b>	2.1A	<b>197,184</b>	<b>202,791</b>	<b>156,349</b>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

### Budget Variance Commentary

Budget variance explanations are outlined in Note 6. The Original Budget amounts have been adjusted so as to be consistent with the financial statements classification.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### Overview

#### Objectives of the Murray–Darling Basin Authority

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (the Authority) is an Australian Government controlled corporate Commonwealth entity established by the *Water Act 2007*. It is a not-for-profit entity. The principal objective of the Authority is to manage the Murray–Darling Basin’s water resources in the national interest so that there may be an equitable and sustainable use of the Basin’s resources, to achieve its purpose, Rivers, for generations.

The continued existence of the Authority in its present form and with its present programs is dependent on:

- Funding from Basin jurisdictions towards meeting the cost of Murray–Darling Basin Agreement functions; and
- Government policy and continuing funding by the Commonwealth Government for the Authority’s administration and programs relating to the Basin Plan and Murray–Darling Basin Agreement functions.

The Authority’s activities are classified as departmental. Departmental activities involve the use of assets, liabilities, income and expenses controlled or incurred by the Authority in its own right.

#### The Basis of Preparation

The financial statements are required by section 42 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- a) *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015* (FRR); and
- b) Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations - including simplified disclosures for Tier 2 Entities under AASB 1060 issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and in accordance with the historical cost convention except for certain assets and liabilities reported at fair value. Except where stated, no allowance has been made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position.

The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified.

Unless alternative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard, income and expenses are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income, when and only when the flow, consumption or loss of economic benefits has occurred and can be reliably measured.

#### New Accounting Standards

##### *Adoption of New Australian Accounting Standard Requirements*

All new, revised or amended standards and interpretations that were issued prior to the sign off date and are applicable in the current reporting period have been considered and did not have a material effect on Authority’s financial statements.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### Specific Purpose Funds Reserve

In 2022–23, the Authority established a Specific Purpose Funds Reserve as a separate class of equity. The nature and purpose of this reserve is to capture and separately disclose the accumulated unspent funds relating to:

- Contributions from jurisdictions received under the Joint Programs; and
- Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) with other entities.

Joint Programs funding is provided to the Authority annually, based on the Joint Program work plan approved by the Ministerial Council. The work plan includes multi-year asset activities. Funding consists of Jurisdiction contributions and other revenue generated for the Joint Program, primarily for royalties from hydropower generation, rental income, and salinity recoveries. Unspent funds for the Joint Programs, are represented in the Specific Purpose Funds Reserve and communicated annually to the Ministerial Council.

MOU funding is provided to the Authority through written agreements between the Authority and one or more parties, generally Commonwealth government entities. The MOU defines the working relationship, expectations, and responsibilities, with a requirement to deliver outputs in relation to a specific purpose and objectives. These types of MOU funding arrangements are overseen by specific governance arrangements including Steering Committees and Governance Panels. These governance arrangements determine the way in which funds are utilised over the course of the related projects in accordance with the written agreements. Please also refer to Note 1.2B for the revenue recognised in relation to these arrangements.

At the end of each financial year, any accumulated unspent amounts are transferred from Retained Earnings to the Specific Purpose Funds Reserve. Any unmet funding to meet current year expenditure related to the Joint Programs or MOUs will be drawn from Retained Earnings and transferred to the Specific Purpose Funds Reserve. Transfers to / from the Specific Purpose Funds Reserve are approved by the Authority's Accountable Authority. For the year ended 30 June 2025 there was a net transfer of \$2.126 million from the Specific Purpose Funds Reserve (2024: \$20.083 million).

### Taxation

The Authority is exempt from all forms of taxation except for Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of GST except:

- Where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office; and
- For receivables and payables, other than accrued assets and liabilities which are based on estimates, are recognised inclusive of GST.

### Changes to Comparatives

Where appropriate, comparatives have been reclassified from the prior period to align with the current period presentation.

### Events After the Reporting Period

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may affect the operations of the Authority, the results of these operations or state of affairs of the Authority in subsequent years.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### 1. Financial performance

This section analyses the financial performance of the Murray–Darling Basin Authority for the year ended 30 June 2025

#### Note 1.1: Expenses

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
<b>Note 1.1A: Employee benefits</b>		
Wages and salaries	46,468	39,164
Superannuation		
Defined contribution plans	6,625	4,668
Defined benefit plans	1,622	2,250
Leave and other entitlements	9,190	6,876
Separation and redundancies	235	812
<b>Total employee benefits</b>	<b>64,193</b>	<b>53,770</b>

#### Accounting Policy

Accounting policies for employee related expenses are outlined in Note 3.1.

#### Note 1.1B: Suppliers

##### Goods and services supplied or rendered

Expenditure by State Constructing Authorities	69,287	74,956
Water licence fee	5,294	5,020
Consultants and contractors	48,809	55,627
Communication and IT services	6,173	5,567
Other employment related expenses	1,863	2,414
Travel	3,773	2,065
Audit fees	90	90
Other	4,658	2,659
<b>Goods and services supplied or rendered</b>	<b>139,947</b>	<b>148,398</b>

##### Goods and services are made up of:

Provision of goods	196	189
Rendering of services	139,751	148,209
<b>Total goods and services supplied or rendered</b>	<b>139,947</b>	<b>148,398</b>

##### Other suppliers

Short-term leases	386	27
Workers compensation expenses	131	149
<b>Total other suppliers</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>Total suppliers</b>	<b>140,464</b>	<b>148,574</b>

The Authority has one short-term lease commitment as at 30 June 2025.

The above lease disclosures should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes 1.1E, 2.2 and 2.4.

#### Accounting Policy

##### *Short-term leases and leases of low-value assets*

The Authority has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases of assets that have a lease term of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets (less than \$10,000 per asset). The Authority recognises the lease payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

## Murray–Darling Basin Authority

### Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
<b>Note 1.1C: Grants</b>		
State and Territory Governments	13,514	12,626
South Australian Riverland Floodplains Integrated Infrastructure Program	8,000	8,000
Private sector:		
Commercial entities	60	35
Non-profit institutions	662	1,216
Other	-	315
<b>Total grants</b>	<b>22,236</b>	<b>22,192</b>

#### Accounting Policy

The Authority administers a number of grant schemes. Grant liabilities are recognised to the extent that (i) the services required to be performed by the grantee have been performed, or (ii) the grant eligibility criteria have been satisfied, but payments due have not been made. When the Authority enters into an agreement to make these grants for the services, but the related services have not been performed or the underlying criteria not satisfied, this is considered a commitment.

#### Note 1.1D: Write-down and impairment of assets

Impairment of trade receivables	10	-
Write-down of non-financial assets	96	1,101
<b>Total write-down and impairment of assets</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>1,101</b>

#### Note 1.1E: Finance costs

Interest on lease liabilities	127	157
Unwinding of discount on make good provision	69	38
<b>Total finance costs</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>195</b>

The above lease disclosures should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes 1.1B, 2.2 and 2.4.

#### Accounting Policy

All borrowing costs are expensed as incurred.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### Note 1.2: Own Source Revenue and Gains

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Own-Source Revenue</b>		
<b>Note 1.2A: Contributions from Jurisdictions</b>		
Australian Government	16,162	15,392
New South Wales	30,992	31,042
Victoria	31,288	31,385
South Australia	25,809	24,817
Queensland	107	117
Australian Capital Territory	156	153
<b>Total contributions from jurisdictions</b>	<b>104,514</b>	<b>102,906</b>

#### Accounting Policy

The Authority receives contributions from jurisdictions based on an agreed contributions model (the model). The model is based on a number of different requirements including specific provisions under the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement. These contributions are recognised as revenue when received or when the Authority gains control over the underlying assets.

#### Note 1.2B: Other revenue

Hydropower generation	6,643	3,523
Funding from other MOUs <sup>1</sup>	13,011	6,316
Contributions by States - Salinity program	1,359	1,795
Revenue from use of Land and Cottage	113	290
Resources received free of charge - Remuneration of auditors	90	90
Resources received free of charge - Comcover premium offset	2,127	-
Other revenue	1,449	1,095
<b>Total other revenue</b>	<b>24,792</b>	<b>13,109</b>

<sup>1</sup> Amounts relate to revenue received for MOUs signed with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). This includes but is not limited to the Enhanced Environmental Water Delivery Project and the Water and Environment Research Program.

#### Accounting Policy

##### Hydropower generation

Hydroelectricity revenue is generated when the release of water from Hume and Dartmouth Dams is routed through electricity generating plants. The Authority received payments based on recovery of a set percentage of the hydroelectricity revenue generated by the plants during the period.

##### Funding from other MOUs

Revenue is recognised based on milestones achieved during the period as set out in the relevant MOUs.

##### Contributions by States - Salinity program

Revenue is recognised as costs are incurred, as this program operates on a cost recovery basis.

##### Resources received free of charge

Resources received free of charge are recognised as revenue when, and only when, a fair value can be reliably determined and the services would have been purchased if these had not been donated. Use of those resources is recognised as an expense. Resources received free of charge are recorded as either revenue or gains depending on their nature.

##### Other revenue

Other revenue comprises miscellaneous revenue that is recognised both at a point in time and over time, depending on the nature of the transaction.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### Revenue from Government

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Note 1.2C: Revenue from Government</b>		
Corporate Commonwealth entity payment item from portfolio department	<u>85,825</u>	<u>87,880</u>
<b>Total revenue from government</b>	<u>85,825</u>	<u>87,880</u>

#### Accounting Policy

Funding received or receivable from non-corporate Commonwealth entities (appropriated to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water as a corporate Commonwealth entity payment item for payment to the Authority) is recognised as Revenue from Government by the Authority unless the funding is in the nature of an equity injection or a loan.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### 2. Financial position

This section analyses the Murray–Darling Basin Authority’s assets used to conduct its operations and the operating liabilities incurred as a result. Employee related information is disclosed in the People and Relationships section.

#### Note 2.1: Financial Assets

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Note 2.1A: Cash and cash equivalents</b>		
Cash on hand	197,184	202,791
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>197,184</b>	<b>202,791</b>

#### Accounting Policy

Cash is recognised at its nominal amount. Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand and any deposits in bank accounts with an original maturity of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to insignificant risk of changes in value.

#### Note 2.1B: Trade and other receivables

Trade receivables	2,752	1,312
Net GST receivable from the Australian Taxation Office	1,929	3,935
Accrued interest	1,895	1,360
Other receivables	2,860	1,464
<b>Total trade and other receivables (gross)</b>	<b>9,436</b>	<b>8,071</b>
<b>Less expected credit loss allowance</b>	<b>(497)</b>	<b>(497)</b>
<b>Total trade and other receivables (net)</b>	<b>8,939</b>	<b>7,574</b>

Credit terms for trade receivables were within 30 days (2024: 30 days).

#### Accounting Policy

Trade receivables and other receivables that are held for the purpose of collecting the contractual cash flows where the cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest, that are not provided at below-market interest rates, are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method adjusted for any loss allowance.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### Note 2.2: Non-Financial Assets

#### Note 2.2: Reconciliation of the Opening and Closing Balances of Property, Plant and Equipment and Intangibles

##### Reconciliation of the opening and closing balances for 2025

	Intangible assets				Total \$'000
	Buildings \$'000	Property, plant & equipment \$'000	Computer Software \$'000	Data Sets \$'000	
<b>As at 1 July 2024</b>					
Gross book value	21,528	1,646	17,135	1,338	41,647
Accumulated depreciation and impairment	(12,780)	(184)	(9,042)	(733)	(22,739)
<b>Total as at 1 July 2024</b>	<b>8,748</b>	<b>1,462</b>	<b>8,093</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>18,908</b>
Additions					
Purchase or internally developed	-	1,905	697	-	2,602
Right-of-use assets	1,020	60	-	-	1,080
Assets Transfer	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation and amortisation	(1,208)	(747)	(2,042)	(83)	(4,080)
Depreciation on right-of-use assets	(2,400)	(38)	-	-	(2,438)
Assets Revaluation	283	22	-	-	305
Write Off	-	-	-	(96)	(96)
Other movements	(1)	1	(1)	2	1
<b>Total as at 30 June 2025</b>	<b>6,442</b>	<b>2,665</b>	<b>6,747</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>16,282</b>
<b>Total as at 30 June 2025 represented by</b>					
Gross book value	21,583	2,883	17,580	698	42,744
Accumulated depreciation and impairment	(15,141)	(218)	(10,833)	(270)	(26,462)
<b>Total as at 30 June 2025</b>	<b>6,442</b>	<b>2,665</b>	<b>6,747</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>16,282</b>
<b>Carrying amount of right-of-use assets included in the above total</b>	<b>4,549</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,627</b>

#### Revaluation of non-financial assets

All revaluations were conducted in accordance with the revaluation policy stated at Note 2.2. On 30 June 2025, an independent valuer, Jones Lang LaSalle Advisory Service Pty Ltd, conducted the fair value assessment of the carrying values of all leasehold improvements and property, plant and equipment assets, excluding right of use assets.

There is no commitment or expectation to dispose or sell any building, property, plant and equipment or intangible assets within the next 12 months.

There are nil capital commitments expected within the next 12 months (2024: \$12,700).

#### Accounting Policy

##### Acquisition of Assets

Assets are recorded at cost on acquisition except as stated below. The cost of acquisition includes the fair value of assets transferred in exchange and liabilities undertaken. Financial assets are initially measured at their fair value plus transaction costs where appropriate.

The initial asset cost includes an estimate of the cost of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised as assets and income at their fair value at the date of acquisition, unless acquired as a consequence of restructuring of administrative arrangements. In the latter case, assets are initially recognised as contributions by owners at the amounts at which they were recognised in the transferor's accounts immediately prior to the restructuring.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### Accounting policy (continued)

#### Asset Recognition Threshold

Purchases of property, plant and equipment are recognised initially at cost in the statement of financial position, except for purchases with a cost of less than \$2,000, which are expensed in the year of acquisition (other than where these items form part of a group of similar items which are significant in total).

#### Lease Right-of-use (ROU) Assets

Leased ROU assets are capitalised at the commencement date of the lease and comprise the initial lease liability amount, initial direct costs incurred when entering into the lease less any lease incentives received. These assets are accounted for as separate asset classes to corresponding assets owned outright, but included in the same column where the corresponding underlying assets would be presented if lease items were owned.

The initial cost of an ROU asset also includes an estimate of the cost of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located. This is particularly relevant to 'make good' provisions in property leases taken up by the Authority where there exists an obligation to restore the property to its original condition. These costs are included in the value of the Authority's ROU assets and leasehold improvements (recognised prior to the adoption of AASB 16) with a corresponding provision for the 'make good' recognised.

#### Revaluation

Following initial recognition at cost, property, plant and equipment (excluding ROU assets) is carried at fair value less subsequent accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Valuations are conducted with sufficient frequency to ensure the carrying amounts of assets do not differ materially from the assets' fair values as at the reporting date. The regularity of independent valuations depends upon the volatility of movements in market values for the relevant assets.

Revaluation adjustments are made on a class basis. Any revaluation increment is credited to equity under the heading of asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that it reverses a previous revaluation decrement of the same asset class that was previously recognised in the surplus/deficit. Revaluation decrements for a class of assets are recognised directly in the surplus/deficit except to the extent that these amounts reverse a previous revaluation increment for that class.

Any accumulated depreciation as at the revaluation date is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the asset restated to the revalued amount.

#### Depreciation

Depreciable property, plant and equipment assets are written-off to their estimated residual values over their estimated useful lives using the straight-line method of depreciation.

Depreciation rates (useful lives), residual values and methods are reviewed at each reporting date and necessary adjustments are recognised in the current, or current and future reporting periods, as appropriate.

Depreciation and/or amortisation rates applying to each class of asset are based on the following useful life estimates:

Asset Class	Asset Sub-Class	2025	2024
Property, plant & equipment	Computers and IT equipment	3-7 years	3-7 years
	Office equipment	5-15 years	5-15 years
Buildings	Leasehold improvements	Lease term	Lease term
Data sets		3-10 years	3-10 years
Computer Software		2-5 years	2-5 years

The depreciation rates for ROU assets are based on the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the ROU asset or the end of the lease term.

#### Impairment

All cash-generating assets and assets held at cost, including intangibles and ROU assets, were assessed for impairment at 30 June 2025. Where indications of impairment exist, the asset's recoverable amount is estimated and an impairment adjustment made if the asset's recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount. For non-cash generating assets held at fair value, the recoverable amount is expected to be materially the same as fair value at 30 June 2025. The recoverable amount of an asset is the higher of its fair value less costs of disposal and its value in use. Value in use is the present value of the future cash flows expected to be derived from the asset. Where the future economic benefit of an asset is not primarily dependent on the asset's ability to generate future cash flows, and the asset would be replaced if the Authority were deprived of the asset, its value in use is taken to be its depreciated replacement cost.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### Accounting policy (continued)

#### Derecognition

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when no further future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal.

#### Intangibles

The Authority's intangible assets comprise internally developed software and acquired datasets for internal use. These assets are carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

All intangible assets in use are amortised on a straight-line basis over its anticipated useful life. All intangible assets, including work in progress, were assessed by the Authority for indications of impairment as at 30 June 2025.

### Note 2.3: Payables

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
<b>Note 2.3A: Suppliers</b>		
Trade creditors and accruals	21,250	27,543
<b>Total suppliers</b>	<u>21,250</u>	<u>27,543</u>

The settlement of supplier payables is usually made within 20 calendar days of the receipt of a correctly rendered invoice (2024: 20 days).

#### **Note 2.3B: Grants**

State and Territory Governments	8,433	2,232
Other	211	110
<b>Total grants</b>	<u>8,644</u>	<u>2,342</u>

The settlement of grant payables is usually made within 20 calendar days of completion of milestones and the receipt of a correctly rendered invoice.

#### **Note 2.3C: Other payables**

Wages and salaries	1,805	1,515
Superannuation	266	239
Unearned income	608	548
Other	26	9
<b>Total other payables</b>	<u>2,705</u>	<u>2,311</u>

### Accounting Policy

The Authority's financial liabilities consist of trade creditors and expense accruals. These liabilities are recognised at their nominal amounts, being the amounts at which the Authority expects the liabilities will be settled. Liabilities are recognised to the extent the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of receipt of supplier invoices).

Unearned income represents assets received from another party in advance of the Authority fulfilling its contracted obligations. The Authority releases unearned income to revenue when the services required to be performed have been performed.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### Note 2.4: Leases

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
<b>Note 2.4: Lease liabilities</b>		
Lease liabilities	<u>5,311</u>	<u>6,863</u>
<b>Total leases</b>	<u>5,311</u>	<u>6,863</u>
<b>Maturity analysis - contractual undiscounted cash flows</b>		
Within 1 year	2,972	2,575
Between 1 to 5 years	<u>2,468</u>	<u>4,471</u>
<b>Total leases</b>	<u>5,440</u>	<u>7,046</u>

The above lease disclosures should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes 1.1B, 1.1E and 2.2.

Total cash outflow for leases for the year ended 30 June 2025 was \$2,758,856 (2024: \$2,629,930)

The Authority in its capacity as lessee has leases for office accommodation in Albury, Canberra, Goondiwindi, Griffith, Mildura, and Murray Bridge. The leases in Albury, Canberra and Murray Bridge include office accommodation and car parking.

Lease payments are subject to annual increases of 3% for the Goondiwindi, Griffith, Mildura and Murray Bridge offices, 3.5% for the Albury office and 3.75% for the Canberra office. These lease agreements are non-cancellable in the normal course of business.

#### Accounting Policy

For all new contracts entered into, the Authority considers whether the contract is, or contains a lease. A lease is defined as 'a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration'.

Once it has been determined that a contract is, or contains a lease, the lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease, if that rate is readily determinable, or the Authority's incremental borrowing rate.

Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest unwound. It is remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification to the lease. When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right-of-use asset or profit and loss depending on the nature of the reassessment or modification.

## Murray–Darling Basin Authority

### Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

#### Note 2.5: Other Provisions

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
<b>Note 2.5: Other provisions</b>		
Provision for make good	1,788	1,720
<b>Total other provisions</b>	<b>1,788</b>	<b>1,720</b>
	<b>Provision for make good \$'000</b>	<b>Total \$'000</b>
<b>Carrying amount 1 July 2024</b>	<b>1,720</b>	<b>1,720</b>
Unwinding of discount or change in discount rate	69	69
Revaluation adjustment	(1)	(1)
<b>Closing balance 30 June 2025</b>	<b>1,788</b>	<b>1,788</b>

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### 3. People and relationships

This section describes a range of employment and post employment benefits provided to our people and our relationships with other key people.

#### Note 3.1: Employee Provisions

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
<a href="#">Note 3.1: Employee provisions</a>		
Leave and other entitlements	15,878	13,387
<b>Total employee provisions</b>	<b>15,878</b>	<b>13,387</b>

#### Accounting Policy

##### Employee benefits

##### Leave

The liability for employee benefits includes provision for annual leave and long service leave. No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and the average sick leave taken in future years by employees of the Authority is estimated to be less than the annual entitlement for sick leave.

The leave liabilities are calculated on the basis of employees' remuneration at the estimated salary rates that will be applied at the time the leave is taken, including the Authority's employer superannuation contribution rates to the extent the leave is likely to be taken during service rather than paid out on termination.

The liability for long service leave has been determined using the Shorthand Method as per the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015* (FRR) and Commonwealth Entity Financial Statements Guide. The estimate of the present value of the liability takes into account employee attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation.

##### Superannuation

The Authority's employees are members of the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS), the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme (PSS), the PSS accumulation plan (PSSap) or other employee nominated superannuation funds.

The CSS and PSS are defined benefit schemes for the Australian Government. The remaining funds are defined contribution schemes. The liability for defined benefits is recognised in the financial statements of the Australian Government and is settled by the Australian Government in due course. This liability is reported in the Department of Finance's administered schedules and notes. The Authority makes employer contributions to the employees' superannuation schemes at rates determined by an actuary to be sufficient to meet the current cost to the Government.

The Authority accounts for the contributions as if these amounts were contributions to defined contribution plans.

The Authority also contributes to a number of complying funds to discharge the Authority's liability in regard to individual employees and the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992* as well as to facilitate the salary sacrifice options of employees.

The liability for superannuation recognised as at 30 June represents outstanding contributions at the end of the reporting period. This amount is disclosed in Note 2.3C.

## Murray–Darling Basin Authority

### Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

#### Note 3.2: Key Management Personnel Remuneration

Key management personnel are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the Authority, directly or indirectly, including any director (whether executive or otherwise) of that Authority. The Authority has determined the key management personnel to include the Minister for the Environment and Water, Authority members, the Chief Executive and Division Leads within the Authority and any employee who has acted in one of the Division Lead roles for longer than three months. Key management personnel remuneration is reported in the table below:

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
Short-term employee benefits	2,307	2,464
Other long-term employee benefits	84	35
Post-employment benefits	283	280
Termination benefits	-	159
<b>Total key management personnel remuneration expenses<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2,674</b>	<b>2,938</b>

The total number of key management personnel included in the above table is 14 (2024: 14).

<sup>1</sup> The above key management personnel remuneration excludes the remuneration and other benefits of the Portfolio Minister. The Portfolio Minister's remuneration and other benefits are set by the Remuneration Tribunal and are not paid by the entity.

#### Note 3.3: Related Party Disclosures

##### Related party relationships:

The Authority is an Australian Government controlled entity. Related parties to this entity are Key Management Personnel (as detailed in Note 3.2), Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Minister for the Environment and Water, Cabinet Ministers, Members of the Ministerial Council, the Living Murray Initiatives & River Management Operations joint ventures and other Australian Government entities.

##### Transactions with related parties:

Given the breadth of Government activities, related parties may transact with the government sector in the same capacity as ordinary citizens. Such transactions include the payment or refund of taxes, receipt of a Medicare rebate or higher education loans. These transactions have not been separately disclosed in this disclosure note. The Authority does not pay any member of the Ministerial Council for the services they provide to the Authority under the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement.

There were no other transactions with related parties during the 2025 financial year (2024: Nil).

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### 4. Managing uncertainties

This section analyses how the Authority manages financial risks within its operating environment.

#### Note 4.1: Contingent Assets and Liabilities

##### Quantifiable Contingencies

There are no quantifiable contingent assets or liabilities in the current or prior financial year.

##### Unquantifiable Contingencies

There is one unquantifiable contingent liability that relates to a claim which effectively commenced in May 2019 asserting negligence in relation to the Authority and Authority delegates' performance of function under the *Water Act 2007* (Cth). Damages are unquantifiable. The Authority's insurer Comcover has been notified of this claim.

Under Section 239F of the Water Act, the liabilities of the Murray–Darling Basin Commission (the Commission) became liabilities of the Authority. These liabilities pertain to the former Commission and include any liability, duty or obligation, whether contingent or prospective; but does not include a liability, duty or obligation imposed by:

- An Act; or
- regulations or other subordinate legislation made under an Act; or
- the *Murray–Darling Basin Act 1992* of New South Wales; or
- the *Murray–Darling Basin Act 1993* of Victoria; or
- the *Murray–Darling Basin Act 1996* of Queensland; or
- the *Murray–Darling Basin Act 1993* of South Australia; or
- the former Murray–Darling Basin Agreement.

There were no such unquantifiable contingent assets as at 30 June 2025 (2024: Nil).

##### **Accounting policy**

Contingent liabilities and contingent assets are not recognised in the statement of financial position but are reported in the disclosure notes. These may arise from uncertainty as to the existence of a liability or asset or represent an asset or liability in respect of which the amount cannot be reliably measured. Contingent assets are disclosed when settlement is probable but not virtually certain and contingent liabilities are disclosed when settlement is greater than remote.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### Note 4.2: Financial Instruments

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
<b>Note 4.2: Categories of financial instruments</b>		
<b>Financial assets measured at amortised cost</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	197,184	202,791
Trade and receivables	7,507	4,136
<b>Total financial assets at amortised cost</b>	<b>204,691</b>	<b>206,927</b>
<b>Total financial assets</b>	<b>204,691</b>	<b>206,927</b>
<b>Financial Liabilities</b>		
<b>Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost</b>		
Trade creditors and accruals	21,250	27,543
Grants payable	8,644	2,342
<b>Total financial liabilities measured at amortised cost</b>	<b>29,894</b>	<b>29,885</b>
<b>Total financial liabilities</b>	<b>29,894</b>	<b>29,885</b>

#### Accounting policy

##### Financial Assets

The Authority classifies its financial assets in the following categories:

- Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss.
- Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income.
- Financial assets measured at amortised cost.

The classification depends on both the Authority's business model for managing the financial assets and contractual cash flow characteristics at the time of initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised when the Authority becomes a party to the contract and, as a consequence, has a legal right to receive or a legal obligation to pay cash and derecognised when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire or are transferred upon trade date.

##### Financial Assets at Amortised Cost

Financial assets included in this category need to meet two criteria:

- The financial asset is held in order to collect the contractual cash flows.
- The cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest (SPPI) on the principal outstanding amount. Amortised cost is determined using the effective interest method.

##### Effective Interest Method

Income is recognised on an effective interest rate basis for financial assets that are recognised at amortised cost.

##### Impairment of Financial Assets

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at the end of each reporting period based on Expected Credit Losses, using the general approach which measures the loss allowance based on an amount equal to lifetime expected credit losses where risk has significantly increased, or an amount equal to 12-month expected credit losses if risk has not increased.

The simplified approach for trade and other receivables is used. This approach always measures the loss allowance as the amount equal to the lifetime expected credit losses.

A write-off constitutes a derecognition event where the write-off directly reduces the gross carrying amount of the financial asset.

##### Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are classified as either financial liabilities 'at fair value through profit or loss' or other financial liabilities. The Authority only holds financial liabilities carried at amortised cost.

##### Financial Liabilities at Amortised Cost

Financial liabilities are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'. Financial liabilities, including borrowings, are initially measured at fair value, net of transaction costs. These liabilities are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, with interest expense recognised on an effective interest basis. Grant and Supplier payables and accruals are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of receipt of an invoice).

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### Note 4.3: Fair Value Measurements

#### Note 4.3: Fair Value Measurements

	Fair Value measurements	
	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis</b>		
Buildings	1,893	2,819
Property, plant and equipment	2,586	1,406
<b>Total assets measured at fair value</b>	<b>4,479</b>	<b>4,225</b>
<b>Assets measured at other than fair value, but approximate fair value</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	197,184	202,791
Trade and other receivables	8,939	7,574
Other non-financial assets	1,634	998
<b>Total assets measured at other than fair value, but approximate fair value</b>	<b>207,757</b>	<b>211,363</b>

#### Accounting policy

The Authority's assets are held for operational purposes and not held for the purposes of deriving a profit. The current use of all non-financial assets is considered their highest and best use.

The Authority's policy is to recognise transfers into and transfers out of fair value hierarchy levels as at the end of the reporting period.

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### 5. Other information

#### Note 5.1: Current/Non-current Distinction for Assets and Liabilities

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Note 5.1: Current/non-current distinction for assets and liabilities</b>		
<b>Assets expected to be recovered in:</b>		
<b>No more than 12 months</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	197,184	202,791
Trade and other receivables	8,939	7,574
Prepayments	1,629	933
<b>Total no more than 12 months</b>	<b>207,752</b>	<b>211,298</b>
<b>More than 12 months</b>		
Buildings	6,442	8,748
Property, plant and equipment	2,665	1,462
Intangibles	7,175	8,698
Prepayments	5	65
<b>Total more than 12 months</b>	<b>16,287</b>	<b>18,973</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>224,039</b>	<b>230,271</b>
<b>Liabilities expected to be settled in:</b>		
<b>No more than 12 months</b>		
Suppliers	21,250	27,543
Grants	8,644	2,342
Other payables	2,705	2,311
Employee provisions	6,411	5,490
Lease liabilities	2,618	2,465
<b>Total no more than 12 months</b>	<b>41,628</b>	<b>40,151</b>
<b>More than 12 months</b>		
Other provisions	1,788	1,720
Employee provisions	9,467	7,897
Lease liabilities	2,693	4,398
<b>Total more than 12 months</b>	<b>13,948</b>	<b>14,015</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>55,576</b>	<b>54,166</b>

# Murray–Darling Basin Authority

## Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

### 6. Budget variance

#### Note 6.1: Explanation of Major Budget Variances

Variances are considered to be 'major' based on the following criteria:

- the variance between budget and actual is greater than +/- 10% of the Original Budget for a line item; and
- the variance between budget and actual is greater than \$1,000,000; or
- an item is below this threshold but is considered important for the reader's understanding or is relevant to an assessment of the discharge of accountability and to an analysis of the Authority's performance.

The budget is not audited.

Major variances and explanations	Affected line items
<u>Statement of Comprehensive Income:</u>	
Total expenses were \$3.5 million higher than the Original Budget estimate resulting from:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher than budgeted employee benefits expense due to the Authority's average staffing levels exceeding the cap set in the Original Budget. As the Original Budget assumes staffing levels are equal to the cap, the \$6.8 million increase in employee benefits is consistent with the increase in staffing levels.</li> </ul>	Employee benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher than budgeted depreciation and amortisation expenses by \$1.4 million primarily due to increased depreciation and amortisation on leasehold improvements and intangible assets, as updates to useful life estimates were recognised in the previous year, not known at the time of the Original Budget.</li> </ul>	Depreciation and amortisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher than budgeted grants expenses by \$2.7 million primarily due to additional spend associated with the Integrated River Modelling Uplift program, an investment in hydrological modelling to integrate the river models used across the Basin.</li> </ul>	Grants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased expenditure above is partially offset by lower than budgeted supplier costs, being \$7.5 million lower than the Original Budget.</li> </ul>	Suppliers
Total own source revenue was \$12.2 million higher than the Original Budget, driven by:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher than budgeted interest revenue by \$4.4 million as a result of a higher than budgeted cash balance throughout the year, noting minor changes to interest rates over the period.</li> </ul>	Interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other revenue was \$12.5 million higher than the Original Budget estimate due to increased royalties from hydropower generation as a result of increased releases from water storages and associated price volatility. Additionally, other revenue is impacted by the timing of MOU milestone achievements and the associated revenue recognition, which was higher than budgeted due to progress on the Enhanced Environmental Water Delivery (EEWD) project.</li> </ul>	Other revenue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased revenue is partially offset by the contributions from jurisdictions, which were \$4.7 million below the Original Budget but still within 10%. Lower contributions were the result of the jurisdictions accessing their accumulated underspends to offset contributions in 2024–25 financial year.</li> </ul>	Contributions from jurisdictions
<u>Statement of Financial Position:</u>	
Total assets were \$28.7 million higher than the Original Budget estimate mainly due to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash and cash equivalents being \$40.8 million higher than the Original Budget. The Original Budget noted an opening cash balance of \$180.8 million, with the Authority's actual opening cash balance being \$202.8 million. The Original Budget opening cash position was conditional on the Authority recognising its operating loss in full for 30 June 2024, which was heavily influenced by the complex nature of the Joint Programs and other programs of work impacted by environmental conditions.</li> </ul>	Cash and cash equivalents

## Murray–Darling Basin Authority

### Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the period ended 30 June 2025

- The higher than budgeted cash balance can be further explained by the Authority not realising its full budgeted operating loss for the current year, as well as lower than budgeted trade and other receivables and higher than budgeted supplier payables.

This increase in cash and cash equivalents was partially offset by:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trade and other receivables being \$4.4 million lower than budget. This balance can vary at a point in time, with the lower balance in 2024–25 due to the timing of cash receipts at the close of the reporting period.</li> </ul>   | Trade and other receivables                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-financial assets being \$7.7 million lower than budget, driven by lower than expected asset capitalisations. Lower building capitalisations resulted from ROU asset additions for regional office locations not progressing as planned. Lower than budgeted intangible capitalisations relate to the nature of spend on the Integrated River Modelling Uplift Program (IRMU), whereby some costs to build the cloud-based software are recognised as operating expenditure but were included in the Original Budget as capital expenditure. The difference between the Original Budget and non-financial assets is also increased by the greater than budgeted depreciation and amortisation noted above.</li> </ul> | Buildings<br>Property plant and equipment<br>Intangibles |

Total liabilities were \$15.6 million higher than the Original Budget because:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total payables were \$19.7 million higher than the Original Budget. This balance can vary at a point in time, with the higher balance due to the timing of invoices received and cash payments made at the close of the reporting period. The 2024–25 balance was heavily impacted by the timing of payments made to the State Constructing Authorities, as well as a milestone payment owing for the South Australian Riverland Floodplains Integrated Infrastructure Program which was expected to be paid when the Original Budget was prepared.</li> </ul> | Supplier payables<br>Grant payables<br>Other payables |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total provisions were \$0.3 million higher and within 10% of the Original Budget.</li> </ul>   | Employee provisions<br>Other provisions               |

This increase in payables and provisions was partially offset by:

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lease liabilities being \$4.4 million lower than the Original Budget. This is consistent with the lower than budgeted ROU asset additions for regional office locations.</li> </ul> | Lease liabilities |
|--|-------------------|

Total equity was \$13.1 million higher than the Original Budget as a result of:

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The above variance explanations.</li> </ul>   | Reserves<br>Retained surplus |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noting also that \$2.1 million was transferred out of the Specific Purpose Funds Reserve to recognise the portion of unspent funds which were utilised in the current financial year. This transfer did not impact the total equity balance.</li> </ul> |                              |

#### Cash Flow Statement

The variance explanations above impacted on the cash received and cash used. The net decrease in cash held during 2024–25 was \$5.6 million, lower than the estimated net decrease of \$24.4 million in the Original Budget. This \$18.8 million variance was primarily due to increased cash receipts from operating activities and decreased cash payments to suppliers, as is supported by the lower than budgeted receivables and higher than budgeted payables.	Net increases/(decrease) in cash held
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# Part 5

## Appendices

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# A. Committee overview

## Authority members

At 30 June 2025 Authority members were:



**Daryl Quinlivan AO**  
Authority Chair

Daryl has extensive experience in public service governance, water resource management and resource economics. As Secretary of the former Department of Agriculture from 2015 to 2019, he was also responsible for managing water resources for most of that time. Daryl was also previously the Head of Office at the Productivity Commission and has been a member of the Murray–Darling Basin Commission and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority.

As Special Adviser on water markets, Daryl prepared the Water market reform: final roadmap report in 2022, which lay the foundation for delivering phased, practical and cost-effective solutions for implementing reforms.

Daryl recently chaired the Commonwealth Drought Hubs and Future Drought Fund mid-term review.



**Professor Stuart Bunn**  
Authority Member

Stuart is Professor Emeritus at the Australian Rivers Institute at Griffith University in Brisbane and, until July 2022, was the founding Director. His major research interests are in the ecology of river and wetland systems with a particular focus on the science to underpin river management. This work has resulted in over 300 technical publications, most of which are in peer-reviewed journals.

Stuart has extensive experience working with international and Australian Government agencies and industry on water resource management issues. He has been the chair of several state and national science advisory committees, including the Scientific Advisory Panel for the Lake Eyre Basin Ministerial Forum, the Science Committee for Healthy Land and Water, and the MDBA Advisory Committee on Social, Economic and Environmental Sciences. He has also held appointments as a National Water Commissioner and as a Director of Land and Water Australia.

In 2019, Stuart was appointed to the Earth Commission, the scientific cornerstone of the Global Commons Alliance, and in 2022 was elected as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science.



**Dr Jane Doolan**  
Authority Member

Dr Jane Doolan has over 30 years' experience in sustainable water resource management, providing policy advice at senior levels to both the Australian and state governments on issues such as urban and rural water supply and security, national water reform, river health, environmental water allocation, catchment management, and the management of water during drought and climate change. Her career encompasses intergovernmental policy development and negotiations, particularly in relation to the management of the Murray–Darling Basin, and the oversight of major water projects and programs.

Jane is currently a Director of Southern Rural Water Corporation in Victoria, a Founding member of the Water Policy Group, and is the independent chair of several consultative and advisory committees. In March 2022, she completed a term as the Environment Commissioner with the Australian Productivity Commission. Previous positions include Professorial Fellow in Natural Resource Governance at the University of Canberra, Commissioner with the National Water Commission, Chair of the Murray Darling Freshwater Research Centre and Deputy Secretary for Water in the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries.



**Belinda Duarte AM**  
Authority Member

Belinda Duarte was recently appointed as a full member of the Authority Board in March 2025. She is a Wotjobaluk and Dja Dja Wurrung descendant, having grown up in river country in Northwest Victoria. With more than 2 decades of experience on executive boards, Belinda is deeply committed to advancing First Nations issues and promoting shared decision-making. She is currently the CEO of Culture is Life, an organisation dedicated to providing Aboriginal and Torres Islander led suicide prevention, in partnership with communities. Belinda was appointed to the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games Organising Committee, is a director of the Western Bulldogs, an MCG trustee, a board member of the AnnaMilla First Nations Foundation and the Djaara Aboriginal Corporation.

As a former elite athlete, Belinda continues to work on innovative projects to influence the health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to improve relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In 2020 she was recognised for her work and awarded a CEW Vincent Fairfax fellowship. Additional awards include Football Woman of the year 2012 & Emerging leader under the Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership in 2006–2007.



**Roseanne Healy**  
Authority Member

Roseanne has over 20 years' experience in strategic advisory and investment banking. She worked early in her career at JB Were, the Australian and New Zealand Investment house in the public listing, agriculture and resources divisions.

Since then, she has held CEO, executive and advisory position in public, private, private equity backed organisations spanning infrastructure, resources, agriculture and technology. Today she is Managing Director of corporate advisory and boutique private equity company Enterprise Corporation.

Roseanne is an accomplished chair and non-executive director of listed private and statutory corporations. Presently Roseanne chairs several large private company boards including Money Management Group. Roseanne has been a director in several highly regulated areas in the public and private sector for several years and presently, chairs the regulator Dairysafe and is also a non-executive director of Rice Breeding Australia and Mayfield Childcare Ltd (ASX).

An experienced non-executive director with a strong legal, risk, finance and corporate governance background. Roseanne has extensive experience in large scale infrastructure investments including public private partnerships and joint ventures.

Roseanne holds degrees in Law, Arts and Economics from the University of Adelaide and a Master of Business Administration and Master of Research (Commerce) from the University of Adelaide.



**Andrew McConville**  
Chief Executive

Andrew has worked for more than 30 years in a range of public policy, commercial and advocacy organisations, predominantly in the agriculture and natural resources sectors.

He commenced as Chief Executive of the MDBA in June 2022. The MDBA is a Commonwealth statutory agency established under the Water Act 2007 (Cth). As Chief Executive Andrew is responsible for the overall operations of the MDBA, running the River Murray system and implementing the Basin Plan. As Chief Executive Andrew is also one of 8 statutory appointments to the Authority Board.

Before joining the MDBA Andrew was the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association for 3 years.

Andrew worked for more than a decade with Syngenta, one of the world's leading agribusinesses where he held several senior roles, including the Global Head of External Affairs and Communication based in Basel, Switzerland. Prior to this, Andrew ran his own agribusiness public relations consultancy company, worked as Head of Corporate Affairs for Business at the National Australia Bank and commenced his career as an economist with the Victorian Government.

Andrew holds a first-class honours degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of New England, and a Master of Science (Agricultural Economics) from Oxford University.



**Allison Mudford**  
Authority Member

Allison was appointed as a full member of the Authority Board in December 2024. She is a strategy and engagement specialist, based in rural NSW. Through her consulting work she has a strong practise and skills in facilitation and capacity building, regularly working with organisations and communities across the basin to build thriving and sustainable futures.

Allison has qualifications in Agricultural Science and has had a rich career with experience and expertise from senior roles in the government and for purpose sectors, managing a range of complex, high-profile programs in disaster recovery, water efficiency, youth empowerment and natural resource management.

Allison, with her husband, has built a farming aggregation that encompasses cropping and cattle farming, across the Hunter and North West region of NSW. She juggles a young family, career and voluntary positions on community and industry boards. She provides technical expertise and advice to a range of government, industry and not for profit bodies currently serving as Chair of the Hunter Local Land Services, director of the NSW Local and Land Service and is an active representative on the Southern Australian Livestock Research Council. She also represents MDBA as a member of the BCC.

Allison loves hearing people’s stories and piecing together connections and networks that will co-benefit and co-design impactful outcomes. She thrives when her work with people and organisations find practical solutions to their challenges.



**Rene Woods**  
Authority Member

Rene Woods, a Nari Nari man from southwest New South Wales. Growing up on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River, Rene deeply understands the significance of water to his family, community, and way of life. With extensive involvement in Gayini (water) issues for Aboriginal people across the Murray–Darling Basin, Rene is a steadfast advocate for First Nations rights in the region. Now based on Ngunnawal and Ngambri country in Canberra, ACT, Rene is employed as the Associate Professor of Practice in the Faculty of Science at UNSW.

Rene has played a pivotal role in advancing recognition of First Nations land and water practices in the Murray–Darling Basin, engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for many years. Notably, he has held positions such as Chairperson of the MLDRIN (2018 to 2020), Vice-chair of the Nari Nari Tribal Council, and has served with organisations including the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries Aboriginal Water Initiative (2013 to 2016). His contributions extend to various advisory roles, including the Murrumbidgee Valley Water New South Wales Customer Advisory Group (2018 to 2020) and the National Cultural Flows Research Committee (2013 to 2018), as well as serving as a panel member for former Minister Littleproud’s Independent Panel for the Assessment of Social and Economic Conditions of Murray–Darling Basin communities.

In December 2020, Rene made history as the first Aboriginal person appointed as a Murray–Darling Basin Authority Board Member. Rene believes in the collective effort to achieve a strong, healthy river system and healthier communities. He envisions Australia leading the world in developing water management arrangements in partnership with First Nations peoples that address both present needs and future aspirations.

## MDBA Executive Board Members

At 30 June 2025 Authority members were:



**Andrew McConville**  
Chief Executive

Biography available at Appendix A (page 118).



**Scott Ashby**  
Executive Director, Basin Science and Knowledge

Scott Ashby joined the MDBA in October 2023 with extensive prior experience in water policy, science and governance.

He has previously held the positions of Chief Executive of the South Australian Department for Water; Chief Executive of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia; and Executive Director, Strategy and Policy, Victorian Department of Primary Industries. He was also a former Commissioner for the Murray–Darling Basin Commission and a representative on the BOC.

Scott has academic qualifications in politics, geography, social sciences, and business administration.



**Tim Goodes**  
Executive Director, Basin Plan

Tim joined the MDBA leadership team on 15 June 2020. Before commencing in this role, Tim was the Deputy Chief Executive of the Department of Primary Industries and Regions in South Australia.

From 2009 to 2017, Tim was the Deputy Chief Executive of the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources in South Australia. In that role, he was responsible for the policy and strategy development of the department, including serving as the Basin Official for South Australia, overseeing the implementation of the Basin Plan and other major water projects.

Tim has a Bachelor of Social Administration and a Master of Public Policy and Administration.



**Jacqui Hickey**  
Executive Director, River Management

Jacqui Hickey commenced her role as Executive Director of River Management at the MDBA in July 2024. With over 20 years of experience in both the public and private sectors, she is well-versed in the complexities of water management, including flood and drought management, irrigation system modernisation, and environmental watering.

Her past executive roles include leading multi-jurisdictional efforts to improve the health of the Upper Murrumbidgee at the Commonwealth DCCEEW. She also supported the National Situation Room at the BoM during the Australian Government's response to the 2022 floods and previously oversaw river operations and the Applied Science Program at the MDBA.

Jacqui is passionate about making a difference, caring for our rivers, and fostering positive working environments. She holds a Bachelor of Engineering from the University of Melbourne.



**Katrina Tonkin**  
Executive Director, Business Services, Chief Operating Officer

Katrina Tonkin is the Chief Operating Officer MDBA, having joined the organisation in July 2023 as Chief Financial Officer before stepping into her current role in April 2024. With over 20 years of experience in Australian Government agencies, Katrina brings a wealth of expertise in financial stewardship, operational leadership, and organisational transformation.

Katrina holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting), is a Fellow of the Institute of Public Accountants (FIPA) and a Certified Practising Accountant (CPA). She is passionate about driving transformative change and is known for championing innovative ways of working. Her leadership is grounded in a strong commitment to legislative compliance, integrity, and robust governance.

As Executive Director of Business Services, Katrina oversees a broad portfolio of enabling services including organisational budgeting and sustainability, strategic direction and operational planning, and the delivery of effective, secure ICT capabilities. She also leads the People and Culture team, fostering a healthy and inclusive workplace culture with a strong focus on staff wellbeing.

## B. Audit and Risk Committee

The MDBA's governance framework includes the Audit and Risk Committee, which provides independent advice and assurance. In keeping with section 17(2) of the PGPA Rule, the committee reviews and gives independent advice on our:

- financial reporting
- performance reporting
- system of risk oversight and management
- system of internal control.

Audit and Risk Committee members, their attendance at meetings and remuneration are shown in Table 17.

Further information about the Audit and Risk Committee Charter and other governance policies is available on the [MDBA website](https://mdba.gov.au/about-us/accountability-and-reporting/policies-and-governance) [mdba.gov.au/about-us/accountability-and-reporting/policies-and-governance].

**Table 17** Audit and Risk Committee members, attendance and remuneration

Member name	Qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience	No. of meetings attended/ total no. of meetings	Total annual remuneration (GST inc.)
<b>Stephen Sheehan</b> Chair Independent member	<p>Stephen has been an independent member of the MDBA Audit and Risk Committee for 4 years and became Chair in October 2023.</p> <p>Stephen has over 40 years of financial management experience. He has a Bachelor of Commerce degree. He was previously an APS senior executive and held the positions of Chief Financial Officer at the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship and the Department of Health and Ageing.</p>	5/5	\$23,100.00
<b>Andrew Cox</b> Independent member	<p>Andrew has been an independent member of the MDBA Audit and Risk Committee for 4 years.</p> <p>Andrew is a corporate governance professional with extensive experience in governance, audit and risk management. He works for the Institute of Internal Auditors–Australia as an internal audit subject matter expert.</p> <p>He has managed internal audit functions over his career, including senior executive roles as National Manager of Internal Audit at Centrelink and Director of Risk Management Services for the Northern Territory Government, a whole-of-government internal audit bureau service.</p> <p>He has made presentations on governance and assurance in Australia and internationally and has taught internal auditing in Australia and other countries. He has authored numerous publications, white papers and fact sheets for the IIA–Australia.</p> <p>He is an independent chair and member of a number of audit committees.</p> <p>Andrew's last meeting as a member of the Committee was ARC 78 on 10 December 2024.</p>	3/3	\$6,534.00

Member name	Qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience	No. of meetings attended/ total no. of meetings	Total annual remuneration (GST inc.)
<p><b>Michael Parkinson</b> Independent member</p>	<p>Michael has been an Independent member of the MDBA Audit and Risk Committee for 4 years.</p> <p>Michael has more than 40 years' experience in internal auditing and risk management. His experience is predominantly in government and covers all 3 levels. He has also provided technical advice and support in other countries within the Asia-Pacific region.</p> <p>Michael served for 8 years on the Standards Australia/ Standards New Zealand joint technical committee on risk management standards. He also served on the committee that developed the international standard on Compliance Management Systems.</p> <p>Michael continues to serve on a number of audit committees and provides quality reviews and advice to internal audit and to risk management functions.</p> <p>Michael's last meeting as a member of the Committee was ARC 76 on 13 August 2024.</p>	1/1	Nil
<p><b>Matt Cahill</b> Independent member</p>	<p>Matthew became an independent member of the MDBA Audit and Risk Committee in April 2024.</p> <p>Matt is a former APS Deputy Secretary, with over 20 years' experience as a senior executive in multiple Commonwealth Public Service portfolios.</p> <p>Matt has diverse experience in operational, program, regulatory, policy, service delivery, corporate and assurance leadership roles. He has deep audit experience, having overseen the performance audit program at the Australian National Audit Office and currently chairs and is a member of several Audit and Risk Committees.</p> <p>Matt is an FCPA and GAICD, and has a Master of Business Administration and undergraduate degrees in Economics and Science.</p>	5/5	\$19,269.96
<p><b>Cindy Briscoe</b> Independent member</p>	<p>Cindy became an independent member of the MDBA Audit and Risk Committee in April 2024.</p> <p>Cindy has chaired and contributed to many boards and committees with expertise in corporate governance across multiple departments.</p> <p>Cindy has led risk, planning and audit functions with an eye for delivering robust corporate decisions and governance. For over 25 years as a Senior Executive, Cindy has worked across a number of Commonwealth Departments as a leader of corporate services, strategy, policy, operations and service delivery, including organisational change programs. She has managed teams of over 1,300 people with multimillion-dollar budgets.</p>	5/5	\$13,068.00

## C. Executive remuneration



The MDBA Authority members, the Chair, Chief Executive and part-time office holders have their remuneration determined by the Remuneration Tribunal.

The Chief Executive determines the remuneration for the MDBA's Senior Executive Service officers under section 24(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth).

Remuneration for key management personnel, senior executives and other highly paid staff in 2024–25 is presented in Tables 18 to 20.

**Table 18** Remuneration for key management personnel, 2024–25

Name	Position title	Short-term benefits			Post-employment benefits	Other long-term benefits	Termination benefits	Total remuneration
		Base salary <sup>1</sup> \$	Bonuses \$	Other benefits and allowances <sup>2</sup> \$	Superannuation contributions \$	Long service leave \$	\$	\$
Daryl Quinlivan	Authority Chair (commenced 23/12/2024)	68,732	-	-	7,904	-	-	76,636
Sir. Angus Houston	Authority Chair (1/7/2024 to 22/12/2024)	57,604	-	-	7,846	-	-	65,450
Susan Madden	Authority Member (1/7/2024 to 25/11/2024)	29,745	-	-	3,707	-	-	33,452
Prof. Stuart Bunn	Authority Member	79,151	-	-	9,113	-	-	88,263
Rene Woods	Authority Member	79,151	-	-	9,113	-	-	88,263
Roseanne Healy	Authority Member	79,151	-	-	8,764	-	-	87,914
Dr. Jane Doolan	Authority Member	79,151	-	-	9,113	-	-	88,263
Allison Mudford	Authority Member (commenced 5/12/2024)	44,882	-	-	5,161	-	-	50,044
Belinda Duarte	Authority Member (commenced 6/3/2025)	25,171	-	-	2,895	-	-	28,065
Andrew McConville	Chief Executive	481,793	-	-	30,118	13,648	-	525,560
Jacqueline Hickey	Executive Director (commenced 8/7/2024)	330,424	-	1,974	43,875	29,072	-	405,344
William Goodes	Executive Director	348,178	-	-	49,752	18,792	-	416,723
Scott Ashby	Executive Director	301,641	-	-	46,137	8,694	-	356,472
Katrina Tonkin	Executive Director	299,767	-	-	49,848	13,773	-	363,387

<sup>1</sup> Base salary includes the current reporting period's annual leave accrual and excludes the leave paid in the current reporting period.

<sup>2</sup> Other benefits and allowances is the provision of carpark and associated Fringe Benefits Tax (where applicable).

**Table 19** Remuneration for senior executives, 2024–25

Total remuneration bands	Number of senior executive staff	Short-term benefits			Post-employment benefits	Other long-term benefits	Termination benefits	Total remuneration
		Average base salary <sup>1</sup> \$	Average bonuses \$	Average other benefits and allowances <sup>2</sup> \$	Average superannuation contributions \$	Average long service leave \$	Average termination benefits \$	Average total remuneration \$
\$220,000 or less	1	32,740	-	909	11,607	767	-	46,024
\$245,001-\$270,000	1	208,471	-	-	31,584	2,730	-	242,785
\$270,001-\$295,000	5	239,354	-	-	36,561	9,661	-	285,577
\$295,001-\$320,000	1	263,804	-	-	38,001	8,870	-	310,676
\$345,001-\$370,000	2	236,016	-	-	36,590	38,548	38,717	349,871

**Table 20** Remuneration for other highly paid staff, 2024–25

Total remuneration bands	Number of senior executive staff	Short-term benefits			Post-employment benefits	Other long-term benefits	Termination benefits	Total remuneration
		Average base salary <sup>1</sup> \$	Average bonuses \$	Average other benefits and allowances <sup>2</sup> \$	Average superannuation contributions \$	Average long service leave \$	Average termination benefits \$	Average total remuneration \$
\$260,000-\$270,000	3	219,689	-	1,799	32,210	9,243	-	262,940
\$270,001-\$295,000	1	238,040	-	-	27,055	8,048	-	273,143

<sup>1</sup> Base salary includes the current reporting period's annual leave accrual and excludes the leave paid in the current reporting period.

<sup>2</sup> Other benefits and allowances is the provision of carpark and associated Fringe Benefits Tax (where applicable).

# D. Glossary

## Assets

Structures used to control flows and supply and manage stored water. For the River Murray, these structures include 3 major storages (Dartmouth Dam, Hume Dam and Lake Victoria), 14 weirs, 13 locks, 5 barrages near the River Murray Mouth as well as 13 salt interception schemes and environmental works and measures assets located at The Living Murray icon sites.

## Australian National Committee on Large Dams

An incorporated voluntary association of organisations and individual professionals with an interest in dams in Australia.

## Barrages

5 low and wide weirs built at the Murray Mouth in South Australia to reduce the amount of sea water flowing in and out of the mouth due to tidal movement, and to help control water levels in the Lower Lakes and River Murray below Lock 1 at Blanchetown, South Australia.

## Baseline

Conditions regarded as a reference point for the purpose of comparison.

## Basin Condition Monitoring Program

An Australian Government commitment to develop and deliver new monitoring and reporting of economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions in the Murray–Darling Basin. The program runs until December 2025.

## Basin governments

The Australian Government and the governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

## Basin Salinity Management 2030 (BSM2030)

BSM2030 is a salinity management strategy that has been in place since 2015. It works to manage salinity and the environmental, social and economic risks it poses in the Murray–Darling Basin.

## Basin states

New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

## Basin water resources

Water resources within or beneath the Murray–Darling Basin, except for resources that are prescribed by the regulations and groundwater that forms part of the Great Artesian Basin.

## Connectivity

Connections between natural habitats, such as between a river channel and adjacent wetland areas. Connectivity is a measure or indicator of whether a water body (river, wetland, floodplain) has water connections or flow connections to another body.

## Constraints

Anything that reduces the delivery of water for the environment. Constraints can be physical, such as low-lying bridges and river channel capacity; or operational, such as river rules or operating practices that affect when and how much water can be delivered.

## Cultural flows

Water entitlements legally and beneficially owned by the First Nations of the Murray–Darling Basin. They are of sufficient and adequate quantity and quality to improve the spiritual, Cultural, environmental, social and economic conditions of Aboriginal people.

## Electrical conductivity

A unit of measurement for EC (1 EC = 1 uS/cm) measured at 25 degrees Celsius. It is commonly used as an indicator of water and soil salinity (salt concentration). Water and soil salinity levels are measured by passing an electrical current between the 2 electrodes of a salinity meter. EC is influenced by the concentration and composition of dissolved salts. Salts increase the ability of a solution to conduct an electric current, so a high EC indicates a high salinity level. Fresh water above 800 EC becomes marginal for drinking; above 1,600 EC it is brackish; and above 4,800 EC it is saline.

## Entitlement (or water entitlement)

The volume of water authorised to be taken and used by an irrigator or water authority. It includes bulk entitlements, environmental entitlements, water rights, sales water and surface water and groundwater licences.

## Environmental flow

Any river flow pattern provided with the intention of maintaining or improving river health.

**Environmental water**

Water used to achieve environmental outcomes, including benefits to ecosystem functions, biodiversity, water quality and water resource health.

**Environmental water requirement**

The amount of water needed to meet an ecological or environmental objective.

**Fishway**

A structure that provides fish with passage past an obstruction in a stream.

**Flow**

The movement of water, specifically the rate of water discharged from a source, given in volume with respect to time.

**Groundwater**

Water occurring naturally below ground level (in an aquifer or otherwise).

**Held environmental water**

Water that is available under a water access right, a water delivery right or an irrigation right for the purpose of achieving environmental outcomes.

**Hydroclimate**

The scientific field that studies the climate system and its interactions with the water cycle.

**Inflow**

The source of the water that flows into a specific body of water. For a lake, the inflow could be a stream or river; for a stream or river, the inflow could be rain.

**Integrated River Modelling Uplift program**

A major investment in hydrological modelling to integrate the 24 river models that are used across the Basin. It will deliver a Collaborative Modelling Hub – a common library for all shared and approved data and models.

**Irrigator**

An irrigator is a primary producer who uses water to irrigate crops or water livestock.

**The Living Murray program**

The Living Murray is a joint initiative funded by the Australian Government and Basin state government, coordinated by the MDBA. It was established in 2003 (in the middle of the Millennium drought) involving both engineering works and recovery of water for the environment to restore ecologically and culturally significant sites along the River Murray System to health. It was a precursor to the 2012 Basin Plan. The program focuses on maintaining the health of 'icon sites':

- Barmah–Millewa Forest
- Gunbower Forest
- Koondrook–Perricoota Forest
- Hattah Lakes
- Lindsay, Mulcra and Wallpolla Islands
- Chowilla Floodplain
- Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth
- River Murray.

**Millenium drought**

A prolonged dry period from 1997 to 2009 across much of southern Australia. The Murray–Darling Basin and almost all southern cropping zones were severely affected. In 2006, inflows into the Murray system fell to the lowest on record.

**Modelling**

Application of a mathematical process or simulation framework (for example a mathematical or econometric model) to describe various phenomena and analyse the effects of changes in some characteristics on others.

**Murray–Darling Water and Environment Research Program (MD-WERP)**

A \$20 million, 4-year Australian Government funded initiative to strengthen scientific knowledge of the Murray–Darling Basin. It aims to generate new knowledge, innovation and tools on 4 areas:

- climate adaptation
- environmental outcomes
- hydrology
- social, economic and cultural outcomes.

**Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN)**

Confederation formed in 1998 of Indigenous Nations from the southern part of the Basin.

**Northern Basin Environmental Watering Group**

Group established in 2019 to coordinate the planning and delivery of water for the environment in the northern Murray–Darling Basin to enhance connectivity and improve environmental outcomes.

**Northern Basin Toolkit measures**

Measures designed to improve water management practices and passage of flow in the Northern Murray–Darling Basin, without depending on additional water. Initiatives are being implemented to strengthen compliance with water laws and increase the protection of water for the environment in the northern Basin. This includes protecting water for the environment to support special sites such as Narran Lakes, Macquarie Marshes and the Gwydir Wetlands, which support fish, animals and plants.

**Ramsar Convention**

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

**Regulated**

A water system in which water is stored and/or flow levels are controlled using structures such as dams and weirs.

**Salt interception schemes (SIS)**

Large-scale groundwater pumping and drainage projects that intercept saline groundwater flowing into rivers and dispose of the saline waters by evaporation and aquifer storage at more distant locations.

**Surface water**

Includes water in a watercourse, lake or wetland, and any water flowing over or lying on the land after having precipitated naturally or risen to the surface naturally from underground (see section 4 of the Water Act).

**Sustainable diversion limit (SDL)**

The maximum long-term annual average quantity of water that can be taken, on a sustainable basis, from the Basin water resources as a whole, and the water resources, or particular parts of the water resources, of each WRP area.

**Sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism (SDLAM)**

Basin Plan provision that allows for adjustment of the SDL under certain circumstances.

**Sustainable Rivers Audit**

The Sustainable Rivers Audit is an initiative of Basin governments, coordinated by the MDBA. Overseen and reported by an independent group of river ecologists, the Independent Sustainable Rivers Audit Group (ISRAG), the Sustainable Rivers Audit provides scientifically robust assessments of the ecological health of the Murray–Darling Basin rivers.

**Take [water]**

Removal of water from, or reduction in flow of water into, a water resource.

**Water accounting**

A systematic process of identifying, recognising, quantifying, reporting and assuring information about water, the rights or other claims to water, and the obligations against water.

**Water allocation**

The water to which the holder of a water access licence is entitled from time to time under licence, as recorded in the water allocation account for the licence.

**Water infrastructure**

Assets used to manage water. It includes dams, weirs, flood levees and embankments, fishways, regulators, pump stations, managed aquifer recharge ponds, injection wells and desalination plants.

# E. Abbreviations



ACSEES	Advisory Committee on Social, Economic and Environmental Sciences
AEP	Annual exceedance probability
APS	Australian Public Service
BCC	Basin Community Committee
BOC	Basin Officials Committee
BoM	Bureau of Meteorology
BSM2030	Basin Salinity Management 2030
CEWH	Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
EC	Electrical conductivity
GL	gigalitre (one billion litres)
ICT	Information and communications technology
IGWC	Inspector-General of Water Compliance
IPS	Information Publication Scheme
IRMU	Integrated River Modelling Uplift
IRORG	Independent River Operations Review Group
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation

IVT	Inter Valley Transfer
KPI	Key performance indicator
LMI	The Living Murray initiative
MDBA/ the Authority	Murray–Darling Basin Authority – the agency/the 7-member Authority
ML	megalitre (one million litres)
MLDRIN	Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations
NABERS	National Australian Built Environment Rating System
NBEWG	Northern Basin Environmental Watering Group
O&Os	Objectives and outcomes (for river operations in the River Murray System)
PGPA	<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (Cth) and Rule</i>
REO	Regional Engagement Officer/s
RMO	River Murray Operations
RMWQMP	River Murray Water Quality Monitoring Program
SARFIIP	South Australian Floodplains Integrated Infrastructure Program
SDL	Sustainable diversion limit
SDLAM	SDL adjustment mechanism
WQAP	WQAP Water Quality Advisory Panel
WRP	water resource plan

# F. Annual report requirements

PGPA Rule Reference	Part of Report	Description	Requirement
<b>17BE</b>	<b>Contents of annual report</b>		
17BE(a)	The Agency p. 15	Details of the legislation establishing the body	Mandatory
17BE(b)(i)	The Agency p. 15	A summary of the objects and functions of the entity as set out in legislation	Mandatory
17BE(b)(ii)	Our Purpose p. 16	The purposes of the entity as included in the entity's corporate plan for the reporting period	Mandatory
17BE(c)	Portfolio and minister p. 15	The names of the persons holding the position of responsible minister or responsible ministers during the reporting period, and the titles of those responsible ministers	Mandatory
17BE(d)	Ministerial directions and government policy orders p. 16	Directions given to the entity by the minister under an Act or instrument during the reporting period	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(e)	Ministerial directions and government policy orders p. 16	Any government policy order that applied in relation to the entity during the reporting period under section 22 of the Act	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(f)	Compliance reporting p. 16	Particulars of non-compliance with: a. a direction given to the entity by the minister under an Act or instrument during the reporting period; or b. a government policy order that applied in relation to the entity during the reporting period under section 22 of the Act	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(g)	Part 2. Performance p. 21-57	Annual performance statements in accordance with paragraph 39(1)(b) of the Act and section 16F of the rule	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(h), 17BE(i)	N/A	A statement of significant issues reported to the minister under paragraph 19(1)(e) of the Act that relates to non-compliance with finance law and action taken to remedy non-compliance	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(j)	Details of the accountable Authority p. 137	Information on the accountable authority, or each member of the accountable authority, of the entity during the reporting period	Mandatory
17BE(k)	Organisational structure p. 67	Outline of the organisational structure of the entity (including any subsidiaries of the entity)	Mandatory
17BE(ka)	Employee arrangements p. 88, 89	Statistics on the entity's employees on an ongoing and non-ongoing basis, including the following: a. statistics on full-time employees; b. statistics on part-time employees; c. statistics on gender; d. statistics on staff location	Mandatory
17BE(l)	Where are we located p. 68	Outline of the location (whether or not in Australia) of major activities or facilities of the entity	Mandatory
17BE(m)	Corporate governance practices p. 69	Information relating to the main corporate governance practices used by the entity during the reporting period	Mandatory

PGPA Rule Reference	Part of Report	Description	Requirement
17BE(n) 17BE(o)	Part 4. CFO Report and financial statements p. 91	For transactions with a related Commonwealth entity or related company where the value of the transaction, or if there is more than one transaction, the aggregate of those transactions, is more than \$10,000 (inclusive of GST): a. the decision-making process undertaken by the accountable authority to approve the entity paying for a good or service from, or providing a grant to, the related Commonwealth entity or related company; and b. the value of the transaction, or if there is more than one transaction, the number of transactions and the aggregate of value of the transactions.	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(p)	N/A	Any significant activities and changes that affected the operation or structure of the entity during the reporting period	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(q)	Judicial or administrative tribunal decisions p. 76	Particulars of judicial decisions or decisions of administrative tribunals that may have a significant effect on the operations of the entity	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(r)	External scrutiny p. 76	Particulars of any reports on the entity given by: a. the Auditor-General (other than a report under section 43 of the Act); or b. a Parliamentary Committee; or c. the Commonwealth Ombudsman; or d. the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(s)	N/A	An explanation of information not obtained from a subsidiary of the entity and the effect of not having the information on the annual report	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(t)	N/A	Details of any indemnity that applied during the reporting period to the accountable authority, any member of the accountable authority or officer of the entity against a liability (including premiums paid, or agreed to be paid, for insurance against the authority, member or officer's liability for legal costs)	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(taa)	Audit Committee p. 124-125	The following information about the audit committee for the entity: a. a direct electronic address of the charter determining the functions of the audit committee; b. the name of each member of the audit committee; c. the qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience of each member of the audit committee; d. information about each member's attendance at meetings of the audit committee; e. the remuneration of each member of the audit committee	If applicable, mandatory
17BE(ta)	Executive remuneration p. 126-128	Information about executive remuneration	If applicable, mandatory

PGPA Rule Reference	Part of Report	Description	Requirement
<b>17BF</b>	<b>Disclosure requirements for government business enterprise</b>		
17BF(1)(a)(i)	N/A	An assessment of significant changes in the entity's overall financial structure and financial conditions	If applicable, mandatory
17BF(1)(a)(ii)	N/A	An assessment of any events or risks that could cause financial information that is reported not to be indicative of future operations or financial conditions	If applicable, mandatory
17BF(1)(b)	N/A	Information on dividends paid or recommended	If applicable, mandatory
17BF(1)(c)	N/A	Details of any community service obligations the government business enterprise has including: an outline of actions taken to fulfil those obligations; and an assessment of the cost of fulfilling those obligations	If applicable, mandatory
17BF(2)	N/A	A statement regarding the exclusion of information on the grounds that the information is commercially sensitive and would be likely to result in unreasonable commercial prejudice to the government business enterprise	If applicable, mandatory

## Other legislative requirements

Legislation	Part of Report	Description	Requirement
<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (Cth)	Work health and safety p. 86	<b>Work health and safety</b> Report on matters mentioned in Schedule 2, Part 3, section 4(2)	If applicable, mandatory
<i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> (Cth)	Advertising and market research p. 77	<b>Advertising and market research</b> Report on section 311A Annual returns of income and expenditure of Commonwealth Departments to: a. advertising agencies b. market research organisations c. polling organisations d. direct mail organisations e. media advertising organisations; f. and the persons or organisations to whom those amounts were paid.	If applicable, mandatory
<i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)	Ecological sustainability and environmental performance p. 78	<b>Ecologically sustainable development and environmental performance</b> Report on section 516A Annual reports to deal with environmental matters	If applicable, mandatory
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)	APS Net Zero 2030 p. 80	<b>APS Net Zero 2030</b> Report on greenhouse gas emissions	Mandatory

# G. Details of the Accountable Authority during 2024–25

<b>Name</b>	Mr Andrew McConville				
<b>Qualifications of the accountable authority</b>	MSC (Ag Econ), University of Oxford, BAgEc (Hons) Agricultural Marking and Policy, University of New England, GAICD				
<b>Position title/ Position held Executive/non-executive</b>	Chief Executive				
<b>Experience of the accountable authority</b>	<p>Prior to taking on the Chief Executive role at the MDBA Mr McConville was Chief Executive of the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, a position he occupied since April 2019.</p> <p>Before that, he worked for more than a decade with Syngenta, one of the world’s leading agribusinesses.</p> <p>Earlier in his career, Mr McConville ran his own agribusiness public relations consultancy for almost 5 years and he worked as Head of Corporate Affairs for Business at the National Australia Bank.</p>				
<b>Period as the accountable authority or member within the reporting period</b>					
<b>Date of commencement</b>	19 June 2022	<b>Date of cessation</b>	18 June 2026	<b>Number of meetings of accountable authority attended</b>	N/A

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### Connect with us

The MDBA has offices in Adelaide, Canberra, Goondiwindi, Griffith, Mildura, Murray Bridge, Albury, and regional engagement officers around the Basin.



1800 230 067



[engagement@mdba.gov.au](mailto:engagement@mdba.gov.au)



[mdba.gov.au](http://mdba.gov.au)

### Office locations | First Nations Country

Adelaide | *Kaurna*  
60 King William Street  
SA 5000

Canberra | *Ngunnawal*  
33 Allara Street,  
ACT 2601

Goondiwindi | *Bigambul*  
72 Callandoon Street,  
QLD 4390

Griffith | *Wiradjuri*  
152 Yambil Street,  
NSW 2680

Mildura | *Latji Latji*  
Lot 4a 152 Deakin Avenue,  
VIC 3500

Murray Bridge | *Ngarrindjeri*  
Mobilong House, Level 3  
5 Seventh Street,  
SA 5253

Albury | *Wiradjuri*  
520 Smollet Street,  
NSW 2640