

Media Release

The Hon Harriet Shing MP
Minister for Housing
Minister for Water
Minister for Equality



Tuesday, 14 May 2024

A POSITIVE FUTURE FOR THE MURRAY DARLING BASIN PLAN

The Allan Labor Government is protecting the nation's food bowl and the future of our regional communities while also meeting Victoria's obligations under the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

Minister for Water Harriet Shing today published *Planning Our Basin Future Together: A prospectus to safeguard Victoria's environments and communities across the Murray-Darling Basin*.

The prospectus has been developed following extensive and meaningful engagement by, with, and for Victoria's Basin communities. It details the next steps Victoria will take following the Commonwealth Government's decision to buy back up to 450 GL of additional water.

Following the release of the prospectus, community engagement will continue across Victorian Basin towns, with industries and stakeholders to identify innovative new alternatives to open tender water purchases – projects and outcomes that deliver healthy waterways and resilient environments – without causing harm to communities.

These community-driven options will then form the basis of negotiations with the Commonwealth Government on delivery, to ensure Victorian Basin communities' priorities are front and centre in the Commonwealth's delivery of the Basin Plan.

The prospectus follows the Commonwealth Government's long-awaited agreement that funding for Victorian environmental projects is essential to the delivery of the Basin Plan.

Victoria remains opposed to buybacks and has not signed any agreement with the Commonwealth Government in exchange for this funding.

Victoria continues to negotiate for a fair share of Commonwealth Government funding for vital water recovery projects and confirms support for outcomes that do not create disadvantage, as we all work together to protect every part of the Basin.

Victoria has a long and nation-leading history of improving waterway health and the Labor Government has delivered more transparency, reform, and environmental water than any other state to date – protecting the state's waterways from climate change and degradation, while improving our critical irrigation networks.

For more information about our next steps and where to get involved visit, water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/murray-darling-basin/planning-our-basin-future-together.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing

"We've done more than any jurisdiction to return water to the environment, improve the efficient use of water, and crack down on water theft."

"Our communities know better than anyone that healthy waterways mean healthy communities and productive crops – and we will continue to work with the Commonwealth and all Basin states to innovate, collaborate, and deliver better outcomes for the entire Basin."

"We will continue our advocacy with and for Victorian communities and the environments they depend upon, while protecting households from avoidable increases to the cost of living."

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