

# Special Talking Water

Tuesday 10 April 2012



Murray Irrigation

## Proposed Murray-Darling Basin Plan

With less than a week remaining of the consultation period for the proposed Murray-Darling Basin Plan, Murray Irrigation reminds you why the Basin Plan is so important to our community and is encouraging all customers and stakeholders who have not yet done so to make a submission on the Basin Plan.

### Submissions close at 5.00pm next Monday 16 April 2012

Murray Irrigation believes the current proposal places too much risk on our communities and our businesses.

#### The proposed Basin Plan

The proposed Basin Plan recommends cuts to watercourse diversions of 2,750GL Basin wide. In the NSW Murray, the cuts would be 262GL PLUS an unknown portion of a 971GL southern connected system shared reduction target.

#### The Risks

The NSW Murray faces reduced diversions of up to 50 percent of historic use, taking into account the water that has already been recovered for the environment from our area.

Around 90 percent of businesses in our region are directly reliant on irrigated agriculture<sup>1</sup> and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) predicts a 20.8 percent decline in gross regional production<sup>2</sup> if the proposed Plan is implemented.

There is no environmental watering plan or flow regime. Key river operating constraints have been ignored. The MDBA assumed flows through the Barmah Choke of 40,000ML per day for the purposes of modelling environmental flows<sup>3</sup>. This is almost five times the regulated capacity of the Choke.

The environmental reasons to justify the need for a Basin Plan will not be successfully addressed by increased flows alone. This has been recognised by a number of scientific reviews including the Sustainable Rivers Audit and the River Murray Scientific Panel.

#### Submissions

Murray Irrigation will be making a submission to the MDBA covering in detail all the issues raised above and recommending:

- The target recovery amount be reduced.
- The Basin Plan must recognise the Barmah Choke constraint and all other constraints.
- Government should properly assess what can be achieved with environmental water already held before putting the 2,750GL into a legal document.
- A thorough review of the management and, where required, upgrades to all public infrastructure should be undertaken including the Goolwa Barrages, Lakes Alexandrina and Albert, and the Menindee Lakes.
- No further water recovery unless it is through infrastructure or efficiency measures that maintains the productivity of our region.

Murray Irrigation encourages our *Talking Water* readers to make a submission. Information on how to make a submission is available on the Murray Irrigation website [www.murrayirrigation.com.au](http://www.murrayirrigation.com.au).

Alternatively, you can lodge an automatically assisted online submission via the NSW Irrigators' Council at: [www.nswic.org.au/form.php](http://www.nswic.org.au/form.php).

The future of our communities depends on it. Numbers are important.

**Anthony Couroupis, General Manager**

<sup>1</sup>NSW Central Murray Community Profile – Delivering The Basin Plan, Marsden Jacobs & Associates, May 2010.

<sup>2</sup>Socioeconomic analysis and the draft Basin Plan, Part A, MDBA, Nov 2011, p104

<sup>3</sup>Hydrologic modelling to inform the proposed Basin Plan, MDBA, Feb 2012, p207