

## ‘Don’t drop the ball on MD Basin’ warns National Water Commission

**A recent National Water Commission (NWC) report on Murray–Darling Basin Plan implementation urges renewed action and cooperation so that real benefits can start to flow to the basin and its communities.**



Credit: Margaret Stoekel, scienceimage

The [report](#), tabled in the Australian Parliament, effectively puts governments on notice by alerting them to the priority areas the NWC will examine in its first full audit report due in 2015.

‘The Basin Plan represents a step-change in the way we govern and manage water resources in Australia’s largest and most important river system,’ said NWC Chair, the Hon. Karlene Maywald.

‘It is now up to basin governments to take action to implement the plan and honour the spirit of their 2008 intergovernmental agreement on Murray–Darling Basin reform.

‘This calls for strong leadership by governments and communities, willingness to work together and sustained commitment of resources.

‘Significant investments by the Australian and state governments have already established a substantial volume of recovered and held water that is available for environmental use.

‘However, there is now an urgent need for governments and their agencies to map a clear implementation pathway showing how they will deliver on the plan’s requirements.

‘Until this is in place, Commissioners consider there is a real risk to realising the benefits of all the efforts by governments and the community, and the many billions of dollars invested to-date.

‘Tangible evidence of progress will be vital in building trust in the plan’s ability to secure good outcomes for the basin

and its communities.’

Through its audit role, the NWC will provide independent oversight on the effectiveness of the implementation of the Basin Plan and associated water resource plans.

‘Our aim is to improve public confidence, strengthen accountability and transparency, and promote more effective water resource management across the basin at all scales,’ added Ms Maywald.

In performing important role, the NWC says will continue to contribute to the vision that Australian governments committed to in the 2004 Intergovernmental Agreement on the National Water Initiative – to optimise the economic, social and environmental outcomes of Australia’s water use.

Ms Maywald commented that when the NWC next reports on progress in implementing the Murray–Darling Basin Plan, it expects to see that concerted efforts have locked in the hard-won gains embodied in this historic plan.

The NWC has endorsed the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's recent approach to identifying priority implementation work required in 2013.

Source: NWC

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