Senate Inquiry
into the Management of the Murray-Darling Basin

Submission by the

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

January 2011

Key points

- There are substantial challenges facing the Murray-Darling Basin. Poor management of environmental assets and over allocation of water resources has seen the health of the Basin decline over the past 20 years. Yet, a healthy river system is needed to support strong regional communities and sustainable food and fibre production.
- The Australian Government is investing more than $12 billion in the 'Water for the Future' initiative. The majority of these funds, approximately $8 billion, are being spent in the Basin (making it by far the largest structural adjustment assistance program for agriculture in Australia's history).
  - This includes the purchasing of water entitlements and water savings achieved through improved infrastructure, to 'bridge the gap' between current water use and new limits to be set in the Basin Plan so that irrigators who do not wish to sell their entitlements will not be directly affected by the Basin Plan.
  - In addition to investments in infrastructure and water purchasing, there is significant funding being provided to assist irrigation companies and communities to plan for a future with less water and to improve water security for urban water supplies.
  - Measures are in place to reduce the impact on the stability of irrigation districts.

- In broad terms, the sectors that use most water including irrigated cereals, rice, cotton and dairy are more likely to be impacted than the horticulture and fresh produce sectors.

  - Further studies are being undertaken to better understand the nature of these impacts on communities, particularly regional and short term transitional effects. It will be important that the analysis is rigorous and based on the best available data.
  - While regional economies of the Basin are generally diversified, dynamic and growing, the effects of the Basin Plan will be felt most in communities that have less diverse local economies, are more reliant on irrigated agriculture and face larger reductions in water availability.
- The development and implementation of the Basin Plan will require engagement with local communities and a high degree of collaboration between governments. The next stage of work planned by the MDBA includes further socio-economic assessment at the regional and local levels to inform decisions, and further engagement with Basin communities and state governments.

Introduction

1. The Australian Government's commitment to the Murray-Darling Basin under the Water for the Future program involves a number of actions that collectively are seeking to achieve healthy rivers, strong communities and sustainable food and fibre production.

2. The key actions in this program include:

   – supporting the development and implementation of a new Murray-Darling Basin Plan that responds to the needs of the system as a whole, as set out in the *Water Act 2007* (the Act);

   – considerable investment in more efficient irrigation infrastructure to enable irrigators to produce more while using less water. The water savings made by these projects are shared between irrigators and the environment;

   – a commitment to 'bridge the gap', which means that the Government will purchase (or recover through infrastructure investments as mentioned above) all of the water access entitlements necessary to cover the gap between current diversion limits and the new Sustainable Diversion Limits in the Basin Plan;

   – steps to improve the operation of the water market, so that individuals may trade their water entitlements in a timely way, based on sound information, to help manage their business risks; and

   – improvements in the quality and extent of information on water resource availability and use.

3. The Act requires the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) to develop a Basin Plan that sets Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDLs) on the taking of water from the Murray-Darling Basin. The Act, including the development of a Basin Plan, was agreed with the Basin States and the Australian Capital Territory at the July 2008 Council of Australian Governments meeting, as per the Agreement on Murray-Darling Basin Reform[1].

4. The MDBA released a Guide to the proposed Basin Plan (the Guide) on 8 October 2010 that proposes a range of 3,000 GL/y to 4,000 GL/y be considered as the additional surface water required by the environment. A reduction in groundwater extraction across the Basin of between 99 GL/y and 227 GL/y was proposed to achieve an environmentally sustainable level of take for groundwater.

5. The release of the Guide has highlighted irrigator and community concerns over a number of factors - in addition to the Basin Plan - that, together, are posing real challenges to rural and regional Australia. These additional factors include the recent decade of drought, changing commodity prices and exchange rates, and changes in farm ownership and demographics.

6. Agriculture in the Basin is a dynamic sector characterised in the recent decade by increasing production efficiency, reducing employment and facing a range of adjustment pressures. During the drought, water availability was reduced by around 26.6%, however the value of total agricultural production was almost unchanged (in nominal terms) (ABS, 2008).

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[1] Available from *http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2008-07-03/docs/Murray_Darling_IGA.rtf*

7. Economic modelling by ABARE-BRS (2010) indicates that across the Basin economy, the net long term impact of the medium reduction scenario (3,500 GL) in the Guide, combined with the Government's water program expenditure, will be relatively moderate in the longer term. In aggregate, and on average, the ABARE-BRS report indicates there could be a 0.7% reduction in Gross Regional Product if the middle reduction scenario of 3,500GL is adopted.
8. While this modelling is useful for long term aggregate and average impacts it is not a reliable tool for estimating impacts at the local scale or for the short term, due to limitations of data, individual decisions on water trading and other factors.
9. The Basin Plan is likely to have greater impacts on communities that are more dependent on irrigation and for businesses that are suppliers or customers of irrigators. There will also be some individuals who are prompted to leave the irrigation sector, hastening an adjustment process that is already going on in the Basin and in other Australian rural and regional communities.
10. The investments under Water for the Future are targeted at helping this adjustment process. The Australian Government's commitment to 'bridge the gap' means that the entitlements of those irrigators who choose not to sell will not be directly impacted. For those who do sell, the purchasing program is helping to add further depth to the water market. The investments in more efficient irrigation infrastructure entitlements will make the sector better prepared for a future with less water, as well as providing significant economic stimulus - for example in the construction sector - in the medium term.
11. Determining where any flow-on impacts arising from the Basin Plan will be significant at a local level requires assessment of economic behaviour at the local scale which is difficult to model reliably. Also, the fact that individuals can trade their water entitlements means that the location of water reductions required by the Basin Plan could change through the operation of the water market. This is most likely to occur in the southern connected part of the Basin (ie. the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Goulburn rivers) where cross-valley trading is relatively common.
12. Further studies are being undertaken to examine the issue of local scale impacts in more detail (refer page 11).

Need for water reform in the Murray-Darling Basin

13. Irrigation delivers substantial benefits to Australia, providing food and fibre for local consumption and for export. The gross value of irrigated agricultural production in Australia was more than $12.3 billion in 2007-08 (ABS, 2010). Irrigation greatly improves the efficiency of agricultural production and the production that is possible from the same area of land. The Basin accounts for around 70 per cent of all irrigation water used in Australia. Much of the funding for Water for the Future programs is directed towards projects located within the Basin.
14. Australian governments began to take concerted national action on water in the 1990s. In 1994 the Council of Australian Governments agreed to a Water Reform Framework focused on separating land and water property rights to enable trade in water, allocation of water to the environment and properly charging for the costs

15. Growing concern about the likely impacts of climate change on future water availability, raised awareness about the environmental impacts of water diversions and slow progress in achieving water reforms led to fresh and more ambitious reform agreements led by the Australian Government.

16. In 2004, the Council of Australian Governments agreed to the National Water Initiative (NWI) in order to achieve "a nationally compatible, market, regulatory and planning based system of managing surface and groundwater resources for rural and urban use that optimises economic, social and environmental outcomes"[2].

17. While there has been some progress in implementing reforms outlined in the NWI there are areas where reform has been much slower than governments had originally agreed. Under the NWI, transparent, statutory-based water plans were to be developed for all surface water and groundwater management units in which entitlements to water are issued consistent with achieving environmentally sustainable levels of use. Ongoing delays in completing and implementing effective water plans across much of Australia are preventing the full realisation of the benefits of an effective water planning regime envisaged under the NWI.

18. The NWI set out a timetable to complete the return of all currently overallocated or overused systems to environmentally sustainable levels of extraction with substantial progress by 2010. In its 2009 Biennial Assessment of progress in the implementation of the NWI the National Water Commission (NWC) found that this central requirement of water reform would not be met.

19. The NWI also aims to create an open trading markets for water where possible, requiring the removal of barriers to trade (other than for physical or environmental reasons). Restrictions on trade have the effect of impeding growth in the productive use of water and preventing the creation of new jobs.

20. The *Water Act 2007* and 2008 amendments established a Murray Darling Basin Authority to plan and govern the management of the Basin's water resources. It also established a Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder to manage the Australian Government's environmental water assets as well as providing the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) with new powers to underpin an effective water market. The Act also gives the Bureau of Meteorology significant new national water information functions.

21. Further urban and rural water reform will contribute to the national micro-economic reform agenda and deliver enduring benefits across Australia and in the Basin in particular. These include economic productivity gains, sustainable use of natural resources, and a more harmonised and efficient approach to water management. Such reform is essential as Australia tackles the challenges posed by global economic conditions and climate change.

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[2] A copy of the NWI is available from: http://www.nwc.gov.au/resources/documents/Intergovernmental-Agreement-on-a-national-water-initiative.pdf

Water for the Future

22. Key program elements of the Australian Government's Water for the Future initiative relating to the Basin are:

    - *Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program* - $5.8 billion to increase water use efficiency in rural Australia largely through projects that deliver lasting returns for the environment, increase productivity and secure a long term future for irrigation communities. This includes $200 million for the *Strengthening Basin Communities* program, which provides grants for local governments in the Murray-Darling Basin to assist in community-wide planning for a future with less water and supports projects that improve water security by reducing demand on potable water supplies;
    - *Restoring the Balance in the Murray Darling Basin* – an initial $3.1 billion to acquire water entitlements to allocate to the Basin's rivers, wetlands and floodplains. Note that this funding was supplemented recently in the 2010 Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook with the announcement by the Government to allocate a further $310 million each year from 2014-15, to ensure that it will be able to meet its commitment to 'bridge the gap';
    - *Driving Reform in the Basin* - funding activities by the MDBA, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the National Water Commission and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the Department); and
    - *National Water Security Plan for Cities and Towns* - funding practical projects to save water in cities and towns nationally with populations less than 50,000.

23. The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH), established by the Act, is responsible for the management of water entitlements acquired through the above programs. The CEWH is to manage the water from a basin wide perspective and in accordance with the Environmental Watering Plan described in the Basin Plan.

Water recovery to date

Restoring the Balance

24. To minimise the effects of the Basin Plan on water entitlement holders, the Australian Government has committed to 'bridge the gap' to the SDLs, so that the extra water required for the environment will be either purchased by the Government or recovered through investments in more efficient irrigation infrastructure. The entitlements of those irrigators who do not sell will therefore be protected from the SDL reductions. The government has stated clearly it will not compulsorily acquire water entitlements.

25. The principal approach the Australian Government has taken to purchase water for the environment has been public tenders. This open, market based approach to purchasing provides the Government with the opportunity to receive sell offers from the largest possible number of entitlement holders. This is important in delivering the best value for money for taxpayers.

26. The Government has taken several steps to ensure the tender based approach is as transparent as possible for participating entitlement holders. The Government has commissioned an independent consultant to prepare quarterly summaries of publicly available market information on water entitlement prices. Water brokers are also surveyed by the consultant to collect the latest information on sellers offer prices and buyers asking prices. These data are used to set price limits for the tender. The data are also publicly released on the department's website as a way of facilitating access to this information for potential sellers.

27. The average prices of entitlements purchased through the buybacks are reported on the department's website. These are updated monthly. Since January 2010 the department has also released the average prices paid in each tender round as soon as it is completed. This information can be used by potential sellers when deciding whether to submit a sell offer to subsequent tenders.

28. The department has used information captured through the government's water buyback to investigate the pattern of water entitlement sales. Almost two thirds of the entitlement holders who have sold water to the Commonwealth over the first three years of the buyback program only sold a portion of their water entitlement.

29. To date the Australian Government has purchased sufficient entitlements to yield on average some 657 GL of water each year. This means that the government has already recovered around 20% of the 3,500GL reduction scenario in the Guide.

30. The Department has endeavoured to be fully transparent in its purchasing of water entitlements in the Basin. This includes a website that provides monthly updates for each of the regions in the Basin (the current status is at Attachment A)[3].

31. The water recovered is managed by CEWH according to its Business Plan[4] which states that it will cooperate with Basin state governments, and other environmental water managers, local groups (such as catchment management authorities, natural resource management boards and environmental water advisory groups) and landholders to identify possible environmental watering options against objectives for use, which will vary according to seasonal conditions.

32. According to the MDBA, a further 47 GL of water has been recovered through recent state based programs (such as the NSW Riverbank program - which the Australian Government has also invested in). This water will also be available to offset the reductions in the final Basin Plan, bringing the total amount available for offsets as at 30 November 2010 to 704 GL.

[3] The following link can be used for future updates http://www.environment.gov.au/water/policy-programs/entitlement-purchasing/2008-09.html

[4] A copy of the Business Plan can be found at http://www.environment.gov.au/water/publications/action/pubs/cewh-business-plan-2010-11.pdf

Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program

33. The Government has committed $5.8 billion under the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program (SRWUIP) to help make better use of water through upgrading rural water infrastructure and investing in water efficiency projects. Around $4.9 billion of this funding is currently committed for the Basin. As well as delivering lasting water savings for the environment, investments through SRWUIP will help to secure a long-term future for irrigation communities.

34. Key programs and projects within SRWUIP include fifteen State Priority Projects (SPPs) up to the value of $3.9 billion (subject to due diligence), agreed in-principle in the 2008 Intergovernmental Agreement on Murray-Darling Basin Reform, as well as the Menindee Lakes project (up to $400 million).

35. SWRUIP is assisting individuals and community groups plan for a future with less water through a range of sub-program activities such as the Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance Program, the Hot Spots Assessment Program, the Strengthening Basin Communities program and support for CSIRO Sustainable Yields studies.

36. The $200 million Strengthening Basin Communities program assists local governments in the Murray-Darling Basin plan for reduced water availability and deliver associated local water saving initiatives. At end November 2010, around $44 million in grants to 75 projects had been committed under this program, involving 70 per cent of the local government authorities in the Basin.

37. A number of projects funded in whole or in part under SRWUIP have already been completed, including the $120 million Lower Lakes Integrated Pipelines Project, the Wimmera-Mallee pipeline in Victoria and the Harvey Water Piping Project in Western Australia. Other components which are also well underway include key investment programs managed by the Australian Government, such as the $300 million On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency program and the $650 million NSW Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program.

38. The Australian Government recently announced its intention to provide up to $952.8 million (subject to satisfactory contractual arrangements) to upgrade the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District irrigation system through the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project Stage 2.

39. Other State Priority Projects are in the process of due diligence assessment.

40. Water recovered and returned to the Australian Government as the result of these infrastructure projects will also contribute to bridging the gap between current diversions and those permitted under the Basin Plan.

Net impact of the Basin Plan and expenditure under Water for the Future

41. The regional economies of the Basin are diversified and dynamic. In 2005, agriculture and agriculture services represented 10.4% of employment in the Basin. Irrigated agriculture represented between 6-8% of Gross Regional Product in the Basin.

42. The more significant effects of the SDL can be expected in:

    – communities that have less diverse local economies (ie. with a high degree of irrigation dependence) and which face larger reductions in water availability

    – sectors in which water is a relatively large component in the costs of production, for example rice, cotton and dairy (as opposed to horticulture and fresh produce).

43. ABARE-BRS (2010) modelled the effects of an SDL reduction of 3,500 GL, offset by Government infrastructure investments and water purchases to bridge the remaining gap to the SDLs. The report also indicated the beneficial effect of the Government's expenditure under Water for the Future, which is to approximately halve the impact of the SDL reduction in the Guide to the Basin Plan on Gross Regional Product and reduce by one third the impact on the Gross Value of Irrigated Agricultural Production across the Basin, as shown in the table below.

Table 1 – Net Economic Impacts of the Basin Plan and Water for the Future

Results for 3500GL reduction scenario	Effect of SDLs **without** Water for the Future programs	Effect of SDLs **with** Water for the Future programs
Value of irrigated agricultural production ($)	-15.1%	-10.1%
Profit from irrigated agriculture ($)	-7.8%	-4.6%
Regional employment (no.)	-0.1%	+0.1%
Economic Activity (expressed as Gross Regional Product) ($)	-1.3%	-0. 7%

Note: results are for the whole of the Murray-Darling Basin for 2018.

44. Modelling of the 3,500GL reduction scenario by the Centre of Policy Studies (2010) has found that the overall impact of the SDLs and water recovery under Water for the Future is slightly positive in terms of Gross Regional Product (up 0.3% by 2022) assuming that water is purchased at market rates and farmers remain in the Basin. This is in part due to the positive economic stimulus effect of the Government's programs.

45. It is important to note that general equilibrium modelling is not a reliable tool for estimating impacts at the local scale, due to limitations of data, individual decisions on water trading and other factors.

46. The impact on irrigation businesses from the Basin Plan will be minimised by the Government's commitment to 'bridge the gap' to SDLs. Irrigators who retain their current water entitlements should be unaffected. However, there is likely to be

impacts on businesses that depend on the irrigation sector, such as businesses that process food or fibre and businesses that supply farm inputs.

47. Concerns have been raised about the effect of individual irrigators exiting irrigation districts, because of reduced water availability, and the impact of this on the financial viability of these districts. There are measures in place to mitigate impacts including:
    - funding has been provided to a number of irrigation companies to undertake strategic planning to prepare for a future with less water;
    - individuals who wish to sell their entitlements and terminate water delivery are able to be charged a termination fee, generally ten times the annual fee charged by the irrigation company for its delivery services;
    - the transitional arrangements for the Basin Plan, in which the required reductions in water use are to be phased in over the period up to 2019; and
    - encouraging irrigators to group together with their irrigation company to develop proposals for managed buyouts and infrastructure decommissioning or reconfiguration[5].
48. It should be noted that normal market operations can also lead to these effects.
49. New analysis will be required to estimate employment impacts of the Basin Plan at the local level. ABARE-BRS (2010) modelling indicates that while employment in agricultural industries declines, other industries will absorb a significant proportion of the labour released from agriculture industries. However, the local effects are not revealed by these models.

Community and Social impacts

Recent trends

50. Basin communities are affected by a range of on-going external factors facing irrigated agriculture and agriculture in general. The changes facing the irrigation sector need to be viewed in the context of other significant changes facing this sector, including:
    - a 50% increase in the exchange rate against the Trade Weighted Index since 2001, with associated impacts on export markets;
    - the recent sustained drought in the Basin resulting in record low allocations in the Murray River system;
    - large increases in water allocation trade – for all Australia, a change from 537GL in 1998-99 to 2158GL in 2008-09, an increase of 400%. A study by the National Water Commission (2010a and 2010b) has found increased trade to be an important factor in offsetting the effects of drought;
    - agricultural productivity has increased by 2.8% per year over the past two decades, compared to a much slower increase of 1.4% for the wider economy (ABS 2008); and

[5] More information on this topic can be found at http://www.environment.gov.au/water/policy-programs/entitlement-purchasing/irrigator-proposals.html

- broader changes in markets, demographics and farm ownership since 1990 (ABARE, 2009), including:
  - agricultural employment has fallen by 18%;
  - the value of agricultural exports has increased by 145%;
  - the gross value of farm production has increased by 113%;
  - farm costs have increased by 67%;
  - the price of farm outputs have increased by 50%;
  - the area of land used for farming has fallen by 10%; and
  - the number of farms has fallen by 14% from 159,000 to 136,000.

51. Australia is a significant net exporter of food, with an export surplus of $14.2 billion over food imports in 2009-10 (Australian Food Statistics 2009-10).

Community Response to the Guide to the Proposed Basin Plan

52. The MDBA has been conducting a substantial number of consultation meetings with communities affected by the Basin Plan. The Department has participated in all of these meetings, making short presentations about the Water for the Future programs.

53. Prior to release of the Guide the Department had conducted 23 public meetings throughout the Basin in 2009/10 to raise awareness of Water for the Future reforms and programs. These meetings were attended by MDBA officials who provided information about the upcoming Basin Plan.

54. The Department considers there are a number of important messages that need to be conveyed to the Basin community about the reforms in train, including:
    - the benefits of healthy rivers for production as well as for environmental outcomes and local communities;
    - the intention that irrigators who choose not to sell are not directly affected by the SDLs;
    - measures are in place to address potential problems such as reduced viability of irrigation districts;
    - the overall economic impacts of the Basin Plan are expected to be moderate, but there will be some communities and individuals that will face larger adjustments;
    - the Government is undertaking additional work to better understand the nature of local impacts; and
    - the Government is committed to engaging with communities to better understand the likely impacts from their perspective.

Next steps

55. The MDBA and the Department are working together to conduct further social and economic analysis, particularly to better understand local scale and transitional effects of the Basin Plan.

56. Further information on the work being commissioned by the MDBA is available on their website[6].

57. The Department is commissioning work to contrast the potential impacts of reduced water availability in larger and smaller towns, and areas in the basin with or without significant opportunities for water trade, this will involve:

    – conducting a best-practice empirical analysis of the range of factors that selected communities may face in the short and medium terms; and

    – analysing the effects of Government infrastructure expenditure both on-farm and in local and regional communities.

58. The MDBA is undertaking detailed consultations with state governments over the proposals in the Guide to the Proposed Basin Plan, as well as assessing comments received from the community. The Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council has endorsed an approach whereby the proposed Basin Plan is informed by the outcomes of the House of Representatives Regional Australia Committee Inquiry into the Impact of the Murray Darling Basin Plan in Regional Australia, on the basis that the final Basin Plan is ready for tabling in the Parliament in early 2012[7]

59. The MDBA is continuing its community engagement efforts, including through the Basin Community Committee. The Government is also taking steps to engage the community:

    – the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the Hon Tony Burke MP, has an active program of engagement with leaders in the irrigation, environment, local government and other sectors directly impacted by the Basin Plan;

    – the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Simon Crean MP, is actively engaging on the issue of wider economic and social impacts through the Regional Australia Development Committees.

[6] http://mdba.gov.au
[7] More information can be found at http://www.mdba.gov.au/media_centre/mdbmc_communiques/communique04

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Purchases secured under the Restoring the Balance in the Murray-Darling Basin program as at 30 November 2010

Catchment	Entitlement Type	Secured Purchases	Expected average annual volume of water available	Average price paid per trade	MDBC Sustainable Rivers Audit Health Rating
		ML	ML	$/ML	
QLD Border Rivers	Medium Priority	6,832	2,255	$2,276	Moderate
QLD TOTAL(a)		**6,832**	**2,255**		
Gwydir	General security	88,520	31,867	$2,239	Poor
	Supplementary	16,324	3,102	N/A	
Barwon-Darling (b)	Unregulated	22,273	22,273	$836	Poor
Warrego(c)	Unregulated	8,106	8,106	N/A	Poor
Namoi	General security	6,203	4,776	$2,050	Poor
Macquarie	General security	57,631	24,205	$1,268	Very Poor
	Supplementary	1,888	397	$161	
Lachlan	High security	300	300	N/A	Very Poor
	General security	81,671	34,302	$683	
Murrumbidgee	General security	86,869	55,596	$991	Very Poor
	Supplementary	20,821	2,915	$218	
Murray	NSW General security - above choke	156,572	126,823	$1,283	Poor - Very Poor
	NSW General security - below choke	35,157	28,477	$1,197	
	NSW High security - below choke	386	367	$2,248	
NSW Other	Various	3,805	1,457	N/A	
NSW TOTAL (a)		**586,526**	**344,963**		
Campaspe	High reliability	5,323	5,057	$2,333	Very Poor
Goulburn-Broken	High reliability	119,229	113,268	$2,237	Very Poor
	Low reliability	10,271	3,595	$196	
Loddon	High reliability	1,614	1,533	$2,065	Very Poor
	Low Reliability	644	174	$200	
Ovens	High reliability	50	48	N/A	Poor
Murray	VIC above Choke - High reliability	39,632	37,650	$2,123	Poor - Very Poor
	VIC below Choke - High reliability	101,978	96,879	$2,209	
	VIC above Choke - Low reliability	5,406	1,297	$193	
	VIC below Choke - Low reliability	5,762	1,383	$199	
VIC Other		425	221	N/A	
VIC TOTAL (a)		**290,334**	**261,104**		
Murray	SA High security	53,611	48,249	$2,242	Poor - Very Poor
SA TOTAL(a)		**53,611**	**48,249**		
TOTAL(a)		**937,303**	**656,571**		

Source: http://www.environment.gov.au/water/policy-programs/entitlement-purchasing/2008-09.html

(a) Figures have been rounded.

(b) Includes water entitlements acquired from Toorale Station.

(c) This table separately reports Warrego entitlements from Toorale. In previous versions these entitlements have been reported as Barwon Darling entitlements. This was because the Warrego entitlements at Toorale are at the bottom of the Warrego River system, which runs into the Darling River. All the water accruing to these Warrego entitlements is available for use in the Barwon Darling catchment.