



# Budget 2020-21: Investing in Murray–Darling Basin communities and building confidence in the Basin Plan

The Australian Government is investing \$269.6 million over four years from 2020-21 in a Murray-Darling Communities Investment Package to achieve a sustainable and certain future for the Basin, its people, industries and environment. These measures also take into account the findings of the Independent Murray-Darling Basin Social and Economic Assessment Panel Report and the First Review of the Water for the Environment Special Account.

The 2020-21 Federal Budget delivers a package of reforms to accelerate progress towards the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and improve compliance in the Basin.

## Why is it important?

The Australian Government is putting communities and jobs at the heart of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan. Measures in this year’s Budget include:

### 1. Investing in community resilience and river health

- This measure will continue to assist communities struggling with the effects of water recovery by extending the successful competitive Murray–Darling Basin Economic Development Program.
- It will help to fund projects to sustain South Australia Riverland environments.
- It will fund community-driven grants for on-ground projects to improve the health of rivers and wetlands.
- It will fund four new First Nations River Rangers teams, creating around 20 jobs. This will help to increase First Nations peoples’ access to water for economic and social purposes.

### 2. Building trust, transparency and accountability in delivery of the Basin Plan

- This measure supports Commonwealth water compliance functions, including establishing a statutory and independent Inspector-General of Water Compliance. This will bring together the water compliance role of the Murray–Darling Basin Authority with the assurance role of the Interim Inspector-General of Murray–Darling Basin Water Resources.
- It will improve metering systems in the Murray-Darling Basin, particularly the northern Basin.
- It will track and monitor ecological, economic and social conditions in the Basin.
- It will improve and simplify access to water information by bringing together water information from across governments in a more accessible format for water users and communities. The detailed platform will provide a one-stop shop for water storage, in-stream flows and trade information.

### 3. Improving implementation of the Basin Plan

- This measure will accelerate planning and delivery of projects that are at risk of not being delivered by 2024, and develop a new National Partnership Agreement with Basin jurisdictions.
- It will help to support implementation of the Basin Plan.

## Who will benefit?

These investments improve returns to irrigators and the community, while providing water for the environment. Sustainable rivers support Murray–Darling Basin communities, jobs and industries. These initiatives will enhance economic activity, and benefit Basin communities, rivers and wetlands.

## What will this cost?

Table 1 allocated budget

Measure	Amount
Extending the Murray–Darling Basin Economic Development Program	\$37.6 million
Projects that will sustain South Australia Riverland environments	\$37.6 million
Community driven projects to improve the health of rivers and wetlands	\$24.5 million
First Nations' River Rangers program	\$4.2 million
Inspector-General of Water Compliance	\$38.7 million
Improve metering systems	\$25 million
Track and monitor ecological, economic and social conditions in the Basin	\$7.5 million
Improve and simplify access to water information	\$6 million
Accelerate project delivery and new National Partnership Agreement	\$70.5 million
Support for the implementation of the Basin Plan	\$18 million