



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

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DRAFT MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN – MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson today said the release of the draft Murray-Darling Basin Plan has prompted more questions than answers.

“The NSW Government is not confident that the long-awaited draft Murray-Darling Basin Plan meets triple bottom line outcomes that equally consider socio-economic and environmental needs in this State,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“I want to make it clear that the NSW Government will not accept a Plan that is not in the best interest of NSW, our primary producers and Basin communities.

“I share the concerns of the State’s Basin communities that the lack of detail in the Plan is leading to more questions than answers.

“The MDBA is telling communities that the Plan is a starting point only and the NSW Government believes much consultation needs to be done in order to ensure we are in the best position to shape a Plan that meets the real needs of communities and the environment.”

Ms Hodgkinson said she will be meeting with stakeholders across NSW to discuss the draft Plan and its implications for NSW farmers, businesses and community groups.

“Unfortunately complete analysis of the Plan remains hamstrung until the MDBA releases their final modelling report to the States in late December. Until then, the NSW Government remains committed to working with communities to understand their needs to ensure a healthy working Basin.

“NSW is still waiting for the Commonwealth to honour its promised water infrastructure funding for NSW and the Federal Minister for Water has written to me assuring me that \$465 million of this will be ready to sign over by mid-December. We expect this to be followed by another \$208 million, for which negotiations are underway.

“NSW has worked cooperatively and constructively over the past 20 years to proactively return water to the environment.

“Since 1993, about 860 gigalitres has been recovered in NSW for the Murray-Darling and Snowy River. This is in addition to a reduction in groundwater entitlements in the six main alluvial aquifers of more than 900 gigalitres - none of which is recognised in the draft Plan.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government has made it clear that we will always support our Basin communities and will continue to do so through this trying process,” Ms Hodgkinson said.