



Niall Blair

Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Lands and Water

MEDIA RELEASE

Saturday, 28 November 2015

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN COMMUNITIES MUST BE FRONT AND CENTRE

Minister for Primary Industries, Lands and Water, Niall Blair, yesterday met with State, Territory and Commonwealth Water Ministers where he called for communities to remain a key focus of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, at a Ministerial Council meeting in Sydney.

“NSW has long been fighting for a true triple-bottom-line approach to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, which truly balances economic, environmental and socio-economic concerns, and puts local communities at the centre of everything we do,” Mr Blair said.

Ministers agreed on the importance of aiming for a Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism package of 650 gigalitres, with sensible timeframes to improve community engagement in decision making about matters that affect local communities.

“Encouragingly, we now have agreement to a more flexible approach to setting sustainable diversion limits – reducing the need to remove further water from agricultural production,” Mr Blair said.

“This is a major win for common sense and something that the NSW Government has argued for since day one.

“There will be no more non-strategic water buybacks in NSW and I won’t be supporting any projects that do not have the backing of local communities.”

Mr Blair also used the meeting as an opportunity discuss the reliance on modeling alone to inform decisions that need to deliver triple-bottom line outcomes.

“These models must be grounded by the unique input and knowledge of the local communities that understand this better than anyone else,” Mr Blair said.

“I’ve said before that rural communities hold many of the answers for the issues that are before us and are happy to be involved in being part of solutions.

“It’s time we started to listen to these communities and are more open to considering their innovative solutions to achieving what all States, Territories and the Commonwealth are trying to achieve.”