

## 5 Year Review's 'stay the course' message sensible

The Murray Darling Basin Authority's first [five year review of the Basin Plan](#) has provided a sensible and realistic assessment of the plan and should provide a strong signal to all involved of the need to stay the course and implement the steps of the plan as envisaged in 2012.

National Irrigators Council CEO, Steve Whan, says "the MDBA review shows the positives and the negatives of the basin plan so far. Contrary to some of the exaggerated public and media comment recently, the plan is not 'failing'.

"The basin plan is less than half way through implementation, and clearly there are some aspects that have been more difficult than anticipated and some remaining big challenges, but in some key areas, including the environment, the results at such an early stage are positive.

"The biggest threat to the plan right now is the threat of political grandstanding sinking two key amendments in the Northern Basin Review and the Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL) adjustments; along with a failure to genuinely meet the promise that efficiency measures will come with either better or at least no negative community impacts.

"Obviously there are aspects of the basin plan that irrigators don't like, and as this review shows again, there are irrigation communities that have suffered significant negative impacts from water buyback.

"But for the sake of the communities, the environment and certainty for the irrigation sector, it does still appear that this plan is the best available option.

"The MDBA's overall conclusion in their report seems to sum the situation up quite well":

*"A healthy working Basin may take many years to achieve, but at this early stage there are good signs that the Basin Plan is working and many elements are on track to deliver on the Basin Plan objectives and intended outcomes. Progress is lagging in several important areas and some very challenging work lies ahead.*

*Basin governments must fully commit to the timely completion of water resource plans, and improve the compliance framework. In addition, environmental outcomes will only be optimised, and social and economic impacts minimised if Basin governments work diligently with communities and industries to fully implement the Basin Plan. Nothing less than full commitment from all Basin governments is needed to deliver a healthy working Basin."*

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