



Victorian
Farmers
Federation

Our 10 point plan to fix the Murray Darling Basin

1. Simplify the laws

By being so prescriptive the Basin Plan is failing to respond to new information. We need a Basin Plan that is easier to understand and takes into account new science around salinity in the Lower Lakes and the impact of water recovery on our farming communities.

2. Stop water recovery in the Southern Basin

No more water recovered from Southern Basin irrigators if water from the environmental offsets do not achieve the full 605GL. New environmental projects that do not require more water should be implemented instead.

3. Stop water buybacks

Water buybacks have a severe impact on our communities. There should be no more buybacks in the Southern Basin.

4. No water recovery after 2024

No more water should be recovered from the consumptive pool following the conclusion of the Basin Plan in 2024. Then Prime Minister John Howard promised our communities this was “once and for all” exercise. This commitment must be honoured by all governments.

5. Build Lock Zero

Governments must commit to exploring the opportunity to build Lock Zero urgently. We can no longer afford letting 800GL of water evaporate in the Lower Lakes every year.

6. Scrap the 450GL Upwater

The proposed additional 450GL of water to be recovered cannot be delivered without causing disastrous economic impacts on our communities and significant damage to our rivers.

7. No flooding of private property

Private property should not be flooded without landowners’ consent. The Commonwealth Government must take full responsibility for any third party impacts caused by environmental flooding.

8. Clean up the Northern Basin

Excessive floodplain harvesting must be brought under control along with improved metering and compliance in the Northern Basin. Southern Basin irrigators and the environment cannot be disadvantaged by declining flows from the Darling to the Murray.

9. A market that works for all irrigators

We need a water market working in the best interest for irrigated agriculture and one that acknowledges the physical constraints of our natural river system. A water market cannot work if you cannot deliver the water.

10. Re-structure the MDBA

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority should be disbanded and re-structured into separate entities looking after river operations and compliance.

The VFF is fighting for a fair Murray Darling Basin Plan that actively responds to the needs of farming communities and our environment.

The Basin Plan is the top priority water issue for the VFF. As our communities endure another drought it is clear the Basin Plan is failing to respond to the needs of irrigated agriculture and the environment.

This is because the Basin Plan is a rigid legal instrument that no politician is game to touch.

Then Prime Minister John Howard launched a National 10 Point Plan in 2007 laying the foundations for the Basin Plan.

Since that time there has been multiple changes of government, but no real changes to the Plan. As a result, we have been left with a Plan that does not provide the “resilience, adaptability and boldness” we were told it would.

These laws mean the Basin Plan and government cannot respond to what we have learned since its inception.

That’s why the VFF has developed a new 10 point plan to take back control of our river system, to protect our communities and our environment.