



Water for Australia Plan

The Australian Government is investing over \$2 billion for the Water for Australia Plan.

We are implementing our commitments to invest responsibly in water infrastructure for communities and industry, to provide water for the environment and to deliver the Murray–Darling Basin Plan. This includes preparing for the impacts of climate change into the future.

Our commitments include:

- Delivering the Murray–Darling Basin Plan in full, including returning water to the environment. Significant funding has been set aside but is not for publication due to commercial sensitivities.
- \$22 million to update the science to ensure the impacts of climate change are accounted for in managing Murray–Darling Basin water resources.
- \$29 million to improve public confidence and trust in Murray–Darling Basin water management, including metering and monitoring of water use.
- Restoring transparency, integrity, and confidence in Murray–Darling Basin water markets. Funding has been set aside but is not for publication due to commercial sensitivities.
- Broadening the remit of the National Water Grid Investment Framework to allow funding for a broader range of projects, including essential town water supplies in regional and remote communities.
- **More than \$1.1 billion** towards water infrastructure projects:
 - \$600 million towards the Paradise Dam Improvement project in Queensland
 - \$107.5 million towards the Cairns Water Security – Stage 1 project in Queensland
 - \$3.5 million towards the Mount Morgan Water Supply project in Queensland
 - \$100 million towards the Pipeline to Prosperity Tranche 3 projects in Tasmania.
 - \$300.6 million towards the Darwin Region Water Supply – Stage 1 in the Northern Territory
 - \$7.1 million towards the Adelaide River Science project in the Northern Territory
 - \$23 million towards the Nyngan to Cobar Pipeline – Stage 1 in New South Wales
 - \$11.5 million towards strategic planning for improving water security in Queensland
 - \$8 million in additional funding towards Big Rocks Weir in Queensland

- \$12.5 million towards groundwater improvement and water efficiency in the lower Burdekin.

This Budget has set aside \$1 billion dollars for future water security projects in addition to the projects named for funding.

Why is this important and who will benefit?

Murray–Darling Basin Water Reform

Although much of the east coast is currently experiencing flooding, the long-term trend is to more frequent and severe droughts. Australia is the driest inhabited continent on earth and the Murray–Darling Basin is Australia’s biggest and most important river system. Our water resources are precious, and it is critically important to do everything we can to protect them now and in the future.

The Australian Government is delivering on our commitment to the Murray–Darling Basin Plan. This includes environmental water recovery targets, updating the science to account for the impacts of climate change and restoring trust and transparency in water use and markets.

We have set aside the initial funding for delivery of the Plan, but this is not for publication due to commercial sensitivities.

Achieving sustainable levels of water extraction through water recovery under the Basin Plan is important, not just for the millions who live and work in the Basin, but for all Australians. As a matter of priority, the Commonwealth will work with relevant communities and Basin states on options to bridge the remaining gap in water recovery, including through strategic purchase, and to carefully consider opportunities to achieve the additional 450 GL.

Restoring trust and confidence

Restoring trust and transparency in the regulation and management of water use is necessary to improve public confidence.

The Australian Government will invest \$29 million to improve compliance in the Murray–Darling Basin and improve metering and monitoring of water use. The Government will enable the Murray–Darling Basin Authority to assess the long-overdue NSW Water Resource Plans. Without accredited plans, the Inspector-General of Water Compliance’s independent compliance and enforcement powers cannot legally commence.

These reforms are critical to increasing trust in the management of the Basin.

The government will implement the *Water Market Reform: Final Roadmap Report*.

Implementing the roadmap will improve confidence in water markets among water licence holders and market participants and develop new integrity safeguards. This will also enable the investment in new data and capabilities that will improve trade and transaction transparency.

This will ensure water users are confident in the market, and they get what they pay for.

Updating the Science

To build resilience against a changing climate, we are investing \$22 million to update Murray–Darling Basin science including:

- assessing the impact of climate change on 16 Ramsar listed wetlands in the Basin to support their future protection and management.
- reinstating the Sustainable Rivers Audit to track and report on health of Basin rivers. This will inform 2026 Basin Plan Review.
- updating the CSIRO Sustainable Yields study to show how much water will be available in the future with climate change.

National Water Policy and Reform

The Australian Government will scope the establishment of a National Water Commission to deliver national water reform, in collaboration with state and territory governments. This is a critical step in enabling the Australian Government to drive ongoing water reform and improving First Nations ownership.

The government will also transfer funding and responsibility for administering the \$40.0 million Aboriginal Water Entitlements Program from the National Indigenous Australians Agency to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water as the lead agency delivering the government's plan to safeguard the Murray–Darling Basin.

National Water Grid Fund

Healthy water systems are essential for supporting Australian communities, industry and our economy.

Consistent and long-term planning is essential to ensure that these investments are economically viable and respond to future challenges, such as climate change, population growth and increasing agricultural demand.

The Australian Government's expansion of the National Water Grid Investment Framework recognises that states, territories, and local government retain responsibility for water infrastructure, but allows for a broader range of projects to be funded. This includes essential town water supplies in regional and remote communities.

These expansions demonstrate the government's commitment to responsible investment in water infrastructure to enhance water supply and support sustainable water security for communities, industry and the environment.

The government's commitment to responsible investment also includes the deferral of a small number of water infrastructure projects where there is presently no state, territory or local government partner, no clear pathway to delivery or no strong economic case. These projects may proceed following proper consideration and if they deliver good value to the community. Alternatively other more cost-effective solutions may be considered.

The Hells Gates Dam project will no longer proceed because a detailed business case determined it is not deliverable, has insufficient water allocation, and would result in significant detrimental impacts on the environment and First Nations cultural heritage.

The Australian Government will continue to work with state and territory governments to deliver the right solutions for water security for communities, industry and the environment.

The effective and efficient use of our precious water supplies, based on scientific evidence and business cases that stack up economically and environmentally, is a priority for the government.

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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