



Australian Government

The importance of water

Water sustains life for people, plants, animals and communities. We drink it, wash with it, and use it for farming and irrigation.

The Murray–Darling Basin (the Basin) is Australia’s largest river system and pumps life through our nation – to farms, communities, and the environment.

The Murray–Darling rivers:



provide drinking water for more than 3 million Australians



supply water to make farmland more productive – an important sector that generates more than \$8.5 billion to the Australian economy every year



bring tourism to the Murray–Darling Basin, contributing \$15 billion to the region



are home to many unique and iconic animals including more than 50 endangered species, 120 different species of waterbirds, and 50 native fish species.

Taking water from our rivers and storing it in dams has dramatically changed how much water flows through the rivers of the Murray–Darling Basin.

Taking too much water from our rivers has caused a lot of problems including:

- seeing our rivers dry up and stop flowing
- lack of clean drinking water
- negative impacts on community health
- loss of native plants and animals.

We need to change the way water is being used to make sure we have enough for the future.

Sustainably managing the Murray–Darling rivers is essential to ensuring there is enough water to:

- keep Basin communities together and thriving
- provide a refuge, feeding and breeding place for birds and fish
- stimulate the growth of plants along riverbanks
- support the food and dairy industries that feed Australians.



Find out how the Australian Government’s plan will restore the Murray–Darling rivers: murraydarling.gov.au