

Basin Plan Review 2026 – what you need to know

What is being reviewed?

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan is the national framework governing how water is managed, shared, and allocated across the Murray-Darling Basin it is being reviewed by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA).

The review will shape water policy, recovery targets, and management priorities across the Basin for the next decade and beyond.

Key deadline

Submit online, by email, or by post to the MDBA by 1 May 2026.

Why this matters

The Issue	The Impact
Non-strategic water buybacks are continuing	Reduces the consumptive pool, increases costs for remaining users
Irrigation costs projected to rise 10–15%	Direct pressure on farm viability and regional economies
Local rivers are undervalued	Protecting them is essential to keeping the basin healthy long term
Communities face a 'missing chapter'	Thriving communities and food security are not formally recognised as Basin Plan outcomes

What GMW is calling for

- An immediate and permanent end to non-strategic water buybacks
- A focus on the effective use of existing environmental water, rather than acquiring more
- Completion of the remaining 605 GL recovery target through existing infrastructure projects
- Locally focused environmental strategies for our local rivers
- Formal recognition of thriving communities and secure food production as core Basin Plan objectives – the 'missing chapter'
- Funding and delivery of the Planning Our Basin Future Together prospectus
- Increased Sustainable Communities Program funding for regional resilience and adjustment

Key facts and figures

- Irrigated agriculture in Northern Victoria generates \$3.2 billion every year and supports tens of thousands of regional jobs
- Without strategic safeguards, irrigation costs in our region are projected to rise by 10–15%
- The Connections Project returned more than 295 GL of water to the environment,

without relying on buybacks from irrigators.

- There are other options to achieve environmental outcomes without further non-strategic water buybacks such as the Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project (VMFRP). The VMFRP projects use targeted infrastructure and operational measures to make the most of the environmental water already recovered.
- Our local rivers have their own environmental and community value beyond their role in the broader Basin system

Why your submission matters

The MDBA is required to consider all formal submissions. The number of submissions signals engagement. The more voices from Northern Victoria on the record, the stronger the case for our region.

GMW has made its submission. Now we need your submission.

How to Submit

The simplest way

- email your submission to BPRsubmissions@mdba.gov.au with the subject heading 'BPR Submission'. It takes less than 15 minutes.

To make a more detailed submission in your own words visit the MDBA's official submission portal: <https://getinvolved.mdba.gov.au/2026basinplanreview> to download the submission template, complete it, and submit online, by email, or by post to:

Basin Plan Review Submissions
Murray–Darling Basin Authority
GPO Box 1801
Canberra City ACT 2601

About Goulburn-Murray Water

Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) is Australia's largest rural water corporation. We manage water resources across 68,000 square kilometres of Northern Victoria, operating 23 water storages and delivering water through approximately 10,000 km of infrastructure to more than 25,000 active customers.

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