

Key Outcomes from the Murray-Darling Basin Plan

Joint Position Statement
from members of the national alliance
Voices for the Murray-Darling

11th July 2011

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make our rivers and wetlands healthy and take a step towards a sustainable Basin future.

A new alliance called *Voices for the Murray-Darling* – representing diverse groups from across rural and metropolitan Australia – has stepped up the call to Basin Authority Chair Mr. Craig Knowles and Federal Water Minister Tony Burke to make the most of this opportunity.

Within a few weeks, the draft version of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan will be released for public review. *Voices for the Murray-Darling* urge the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to ensure that the Basin Plan delivers the following seven key outcomes:

- The Basin Plan **must be based on credible, peer-reviewed science** and the processes used to develop and implement the Basin Plan must be robust and transparent;
- The Basin Plan **must return at least a minimum of 4000 GL of water** to environmental flows or **limit extraction to one third of natural flows** in order to restore the ecological health and resilience of the Basin's river systems;
- The Basin Plan **must provide sufficient water to enable the Basin's two million tonnes of salt and other pollutants to be flushed out** through the Murray Mouth to the sea;
- The Basin Plan **must provide optimal flows so that essential ecosystem services are maintained** throughout the Murray-Darling Basin including;
 - nutrient cycling and other river forming processes; and
 - over bank flows to maintain wetlands and other floodplain habitats; and
 - recharge of groundwater systems and alluvial aquifers;
- The Basin Plan **must acknowledge Indigenous rights in cultural flows** as integral to the Plan;
- The Basin Plan **must represent value for the \$10 billion of Australian taxpayers' money** allocated to help communities adjust to the change by ensuring that policies, management frameworks and evaluation methods deliver tangible environmental outcomes, now and into the future; and
- The Basin Plan **must have clear and transparent targets** that trigger the revision of management frameworks, evaluation methods and adoption of improved scientific understanding.

For more information about *Voices for the Murray-Darling* visit <http://lifeblood.org.au>