

Mr Craig Knowles  
Chairman  
Murray Darling Basin Authority  
GPO Box 1801  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Knowles

Further to my letter of 20<sup>th</sup> July 2011, the NSW Office of Water hydrogeologists have reviewed the MDBA's proposed SDLs for the Lachlan Fold Belt and Western Porous Rock groundwater systems and potential requirements over the period of the Basin Plan 2012 to 2022.

Given the MDBA's opposition to a SDL range for the systems, the following revised SDLs (column 5) should be included in the Proposed Basin Plan:

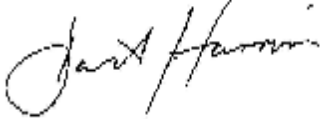
SDL area ID	Name	LTAEL GL/yr (NSW water sharing plans)	MDBA's proposed SDL	NSW's Revised SDL
30	Lachlan Fold Belt: Lachlan	208.35	74.1	130.9
31	Lachlan Fold Belt: Macquarie Castlereagh	204.24	126.8	131.7
32	Lachlan Fold Belt: Murray	58.02	19.5	36.2
33	Lachlan Fold Belt: Murrumbidgee	195.56	79.0	111.0
34	Lachlan Fold Belt: Western	155.07	115.9	115.9
63	Western Porous Rocks	530.49	81.3	225.9

The revised volumes are conservative. The long term average extraction limit is firstly only a proportion of the average annual recharge which is then further reduced in accordance with NSW's unassigned groundwater policy. NSW's unassigned groundwater policy allows entitlement to be issued up to a proportion of the estimated long term average annual extraction limit at which time additional information on the potential impact would be required before any further groundwater entitlement would be issued.

These groundwater systems are brackish, undeveloped and not connected to surface water, and represent the only potential source of water for future mining requirements in these areas. The revised volumes are considered sufficient to meet likely demands for the mining industry for the period of the Basin Plan (2012 to 2022) while ensuring that extractions remain well within sustainable limits.

With significant volumes of surface water to be removed from irrigation production as a result of the Basin Plan and the potential social and economic impacts to rural communities and the NSW economy, it is important that opportunities for other water use industries to develop and use these groundwater sources are not unnecessarily prevented based on incorrect assumptions regarding surface water connectivity.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Harriss". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

**David Harriss**  
**Commissioner, NSW Office of Water**

28 July 2011