

From: Thistlethwaite, Matt (Senator) [<mailto:Senator.Thistlethwaite@aph.gov.au>]
Sent: Monday, 19 December 2011 1:09 PM
To: 'Andrew Gregson'
Subject: RE: It's time for a balanced Basin Plan

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your email concerning the Basin Plan being prepared by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (the Authority).

The Gillard Government is committed to reform for the Murray Darling Basin that delivers a healthy river system, strong regional communities and sustainable food production. It is clear that we can't continue to manage the Basin's rivers in the same way that we have in the past.

The Authority has now released its Draft Plan for the Murray Darling Basin for community consultation. There will now be a 20 week public consultation period, and then a further opportunity for state governments to provide input. The Government expects to receive the final Basin Plan for approval in 2012.

The Authority's Draft Plan proposes that 2,750 Gl of water needs to be returned to the environment by 2019. Progress is already being made towards any recovery targets which are set in the final Basin Plan. When recent infrastructure announcements are taken into account, nearly 1,300 Gl of water has already been secured.

The Government has committed significant funding to reduce possible impacts of the Basin Plan, including a commitment to bridge the gap between current diversions limits and those allowed under the Plan. This means that the water entitlements of individuals who choose not to sell will not be affected. Further, water will be recovered at a measured pace between now and 2019 so that time is available for communities to adjust.

Our investments in more efficient irrigation infrastructure will also mean a more productive and sustainable industry. More information on the government's programs can be found at www.environment.gov.au/water.

I am confident that we can deliver reform for the Murray-Darling Basin that delivers our three objectives of a healthy river system, strong regional communities and sustainable food production.

Yours sincerely

Senator Matt Thistlethwaite

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From: Andrew Gregson [<mailto:andrew=nswic.org.au@sendgrid.me>] **On Behalf Of** Andrew Gregson
Sent: Friday, 4 November 2011 12:13 PM
To: Thistlethwaite, Matt (Senator)
Subject: It's time for a balanced Basin Plan

We disagree with automated letter writing tools and think you should discount “one click commitment”. We're using the letter writing tool on the Australian Conservation Foundation website to make that point.

We think real commitment to an issue is the tens of thousands of people across the Murray-Darling Basin who closed their businesses or were allowed time from their employment to attend MDBA meetings last year.

They made it very, very clear that the Guide to the Basin Plan was unacceptable. The Water Ministers Council is being told in Canberra today that the Draft is pretty much unchanged from the Guide. That means tens of thousands of jobs are still at risk, that family farms will face closure and that fresh food prices will likely increase.

We think that's a bad result – and you should too.

Yours sincerely,
Andrew Gregson Chief Executive Officer
New South Wales Irrigators Council
