

Independent Assurance Committee to strengthen Basin-wide compliance

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The Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) continues to deliver on commitments made as part of a Basin-wide review of compliance, today announcing membership of an Independent Assurance Committee (IAC) to provide expert advice on the design, implementation and adequacy of the MDBA's Basin Plan compliance program.

MDBA Chief Executive, Phillip Glyde, said the IAC would be made up of independent experts with knowledge across a range of relevant fields, including in water and natural resources policy and management, and regulation and compliance.

"I am pleased that Allan Holmes, Lisa Corbyn, Garry Smith and Martin Dolan will be bringing their considerable knowledge and expertise to the IAC," Mr Glyde said.

"The establishment of the IAC delivers on an important commitment under last year's Basin-wide review of compliance, and will hold the MDBA to account in fully and proactively discharging its compliance roles and responsibilities under the Murray–Darling Basin Plan."

Mr Glyde also welcomed the nomination of Dr Wendy Craik AM as the independent and eminent person to bring together the findings of the various compliance reports and provide advice to Ministers on implementation of Basin-wide compliance arrangements.

"Dr Craik chairs the Climate Change Authority and has extensive natural resource management and agricultural experience and is a strong nominee for the position," Mr Glyde said.

"The IAC will provide advice – which will be publicly available – on the MDBA's compliance strategy and approach, program design and agency capability.

"They will help us to ensure adequate attention is given to high risk areas for Basin Plan implementation, including state and MDBA compliance arrangements and reporting, state water resource plans and improved management of environmental water.

"The MDBA remains focused on delivering the recommendations of the Basin-wide review of compliance, and has already taken a number of decisive actions to strengthen compliance.

"We have already established an Office of Compliance within the MDBA, strengthened processes and governance arrangements and increased transparency for managing compliance matters. We are also in the process of further building our compliance and enforcement resourcing.

"We will continue to work to ensure that all Australians can trust that the Basin Plan is being complied with, and is being enforced fairly and consistently across the entire Basin—so that communities can have confidence that the Plan will deliver its intended social, economic and environmental benefits."

The IAC will develop an annual work program, which for 2018 is expected to include:

- implementation of MDBA actions under the recent MDB Compliance Review
- advice on the Basin Compliance Compact, which all Basin ministers agreed to develop at the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council meeting in December 2017
- progress with Commonwealth accreditation of state water resources plans and the protection of environmental water.

More information on the Basin-wide review of compliance by the MDBA and independent panel can be found at mdba.gov.au/basin-plan-roll-out/basin-wide-compliance-review.

Additional information on IAC members:

Allan Holmes has extensive experience in water policy, management and regulation in Victoria and South Australia—and also lent his expertise to the independent panel which reviewed compliance across the Basin last year.

Lisa Corbyn has impressive knowledge and experience in water programs, environmental and natural resources policy, land and program management and regulation, both in New South Wales and internationally.

Garry Smith is a civil engineer, with broad-ranging expertise in the water industry including at Goulburn-Murray Water and Melbourne Water.

Martin Dolan has extensive experience in the development and operation of compliance and regulatory systems in a range of sectors at the Commonwealth level.

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