

At its meeting on 6 June 2017 in Canberra, the Murray–Darling Basin Authority heard about the progress of negotiations with Basin jurisdictions on the proposed Basin Plan amendments and the northern Basin review toolkit measures. The proposed amendments and a draft protocol for the implementation of toolkit measures will be presented to the Murray–Darling Basin Ministerial Council at its meeting on 16 June 2017.

Members were updated on the modelling analysis of water savings that could be achieved via the sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism. Advice on the expected quantum of savings will also be provided to the upcoming Ministerial Council meeting.

Each of the members gave updates on recent activities, primarily these have been meetings and presentations about the MDBA’s work with community groups. The Chair, Mr Neil Andrew, was pleased to be able to launch the video ‘Salt of the Earth’ at the Mildura Field Days. This tells the story of the achievements of farmers and governments who stepped up to find solutions to salinity.

Mr Rory Treweeke, chair of the Basin Community Committee (BCC) reported on BCC members’ activities over the past month. They have attended meetings like the Water Planners forum, hosted visits to their region from MDBA staff and attended updates on the NSW Healthy Floodplains Project. Mr Treweeke reflected on the relationship between the BCC and MDBA’s regional engagement officers indicating that the BCC is keen to be involved in the review of the program.

The Authority was pleased to endorse the NSW pre-requisite policy measure implementation plan. It also endorsed the plan for the River Murray subject to NSW and Victoria also endorsing it by 30 June 2017. Pre-requisite policy measure implementation plans set out actions to address issues relating to the crediting of environmental return flows and the call of environmental water from storages in the Basin Plan.

A comprehensive overview was given on trials of environmental water delivery carried out by river operators since 2010. The trials have been testing management actions that will help preserve the reliability of entitlements while still delivering the outcomes of the Basin Plan. The results of the trials will now be reviewed and presented to partner governments.

The Authority heard about the Water Planners Forum held in Toowoomba in May 2017, attended by all Basin jurisdictions. There was a welcome spirit of cooperation amongst those who attended. Members were also updated on the progress towards streamlining the development of the water resource plans. They were advised that the draft Wimmera–Mallee water resource plan has been received and is being assessed for accreditation.

The Aboriginal Partnerships team presented the Authority with the recently revised Aboriginal Partnerships Action Plan. The new plan reflects increased efforts in monitoring and evaluation. The Authority noted the changes.

The Authority also noted the progress on the preparation of the *Transition Period Water Take Report 2012–13 to 2015–16*. This is will replace the annual Water Audit Monitoring reports and will provide an account of water use for the 2012–13 to 2015–16 period.

Ms Jo Schumann, Executive Director of Corporate Division, provided the members with the quarter 3 performance report. In noting the report, the Chair congratulated Ms Schumann on the recent announcement of her retirement and expressed the Authority's great appreciation of her contribution to the Authority's work.

The Authority will next meet on 4 July 2017 in Canberra.