



## Water in New South Wales

# People over politics to save Basin rivers

Media release | 13 February 2018

The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government together with the Victorian Labor Government today held an urgent meeting to discuss the options available in their respective states should the Federal Opposition and Greens vote to unwind the historic Murray Darling Basin Plan.

NSW Minister for Regional Water, Niall Blair and Victorian Minister for Water, Lisa Neville jointly urged the Federal Opposition and cross-bench senators in Canberra to support the Murray Darling Basin Plan by voting for pivotal changes required to deliver healthy rivers and strong communities.

Mr Blair said it is very clear that a vote to disallow is a vote to kill off the plan.

“This disallowance vote undermines important reforms that helped fix a 100-year old problem, and hurts the communities who have sacrificed and worked tirelessly to make the Basin Plan a success,” Mr Blair said.

“It takes us back to square one and NSW will need to seek a new agreement directly with Victoria in order to deliver healthy rivers and one in which people, not politics, are put first.”

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan is a landmark agreement between five states and the Commonwealth, supported across the political spectrum to improve the health of Australia’s most important rivers.

The disallowance vote prevents \$180 million from going towards the health of rivers and fish populations in northern NSW and Queensland and would mean a further 221 Gigalitres of water buybacks in southern NSW.

To put this into perspective, this would be the equivalent of diverting about half of Sydney Harbour away from our food and fibre producers each year.

Mr Blair said NSW should not be subjected to the political games of the Australian Senate.

“The fact that some Senators want to renege on the plan agreed to in 2012 is a slap in the face to everyone who has made significant commitments,” Mr Blair said.

“Our communities and the environment deserve better and most importantly, they deserve certainty.”

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Page link: <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/news/people-over-politics-to-save-basin-rivers>