

From: Emma Carmody
To: [Opacic, Michael \(MDBRC\)](#)
Subject: Fw: Questions about SDLs and Caps [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Wednesday, 26 September 2018 4:52:26 PM
Attachments: [image001.gif](#)
[image002.jpg](#)

Dear Michael,

As requested by the Commissioner, please see below the correspondence between Michael Slezak of the ABC and the MDBA regarding floodplain harvesting.

Kind Regards

Emma

From: MDBA Media

Sent: Tuesday, 15 May 2018 3:37 PM

To: Michael Slezak

Cc: MDBA Media

Subject: RE: Questions about SDLs and Caps [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Michael,

Please see below responses, attributable to an MDBA spokesperson.

Questions and responses:

1. In June 1995 the Murray-Darling Ministerial Council decided to introduce caps for diversions. It was decided that diversions would be capped at 1993/4 levels for NSW, Victoria and SA. What is the status of that decision now? (Is it still in play?)

The Cap on diversions is still in place and continues to be subject to annual reporting and compliance. The most up to date report on the Cap is available at:

<https://www.mdba.gov.au/publications/mdba-reports/transitional-sdl-water-take-reports>

[Transitional SDL water take reports | Murray-Darling Basin ...](#)

www.mdba.gov.au

Since 2012, Basin states have been required to report on water take in each SDL resource unit as well as meeting their annual Cap reporting requirements. We are working closely with Basin states to trial the monitoring and accounting methods that will be used when the sustainable diversion limits are in force in 2019.

2. Sustainable Diversion Limits for the Plan estimated that there was about 210 GL of floodplain harvesting occurring across the entire Basin. NSW estimates there is three times that amount occurring in the Gwydir catchment alone and proposes to licence that harvesting. If that happens, what will happen to the SDL?

The Baseline Diversion Limit (BDL) is an estimate of how much water (on average) was used in the Murray–Darling Basin prior to the development of the Basin Plan, as at 2009. The Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDLs) specified in the Basin Plan were set from this figure in order to recover water for the environment.

The calculation of the BDL was based on the best available information on the amount of diversions taking place. It was always expected that the estimate of the BDL would increase as our understanding and capacity to account for all types of water use improves. Floodplain harvesting is a good example of this.

An increase in the BDL to account for a wider range of water use will not impact the amount of water returned to the environment under the Basin Plan. If the BDL is changed, the SDL will also be changed to reflect the additional water use. This will not impact the achievement of environmental outcomes.

NSW is expected to bring forward improved estimates of BDLs for floodplain harvesting in conjunction with its Water Resource Plans.

Thanks,

Dominique

MDBA Media team



Murray–Darling Basin Authority

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In the spirit of strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal people the MDBA acknowledges the cultural authority of the Traditional Owners in the Murray–Darling Basin

From: Michael Slezak [<mailto:Slezak.Michael@abc.net.au>]

Sent: Tuesday, 15 May 2018 2:51 PM

To: MDBA Media <MediaEnquiries@mdba.gov.au>

Subject: RE: Questions about SDLs and Caps [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Dominique,

Thanks. Can you get back to me by COB today?

From: MDBA Media <MediaEnquiries@mdba.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 15 May 2018 2:37 PM

To: Michael Slezak <Slezak.Michael@abc.net.au>

Cc: MDBA Media <MediaEnquiries@mdba.gov.au>

Subject: RE: Questions about SDLs and Caps [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Michael,

Apologies we haven't been in touch – we've been working on your response.

When is your latest deadline?

Thanks,

Dominique

MDBA Media team



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In the spirit of strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal people the MDBA acknowledges the cultural authority of the Traditional Owners in the Murray–Darling Basin

From: Michael Slezak [<mailto:Slezak.Michael@abc.net.au>]

Sent: Monday, 14 May 2018 3:17 PM

To: MDBA Media <MediaEnquiries@mdba.gov.au>

Subject: Questions about SDLs and Caps

Hi there,

Can you help me out with some general info about the Murray Darling Basin Plan?

Are you able to get responses back to me by 2pm tomorrow (Tuesday)?

Here's what I'm wondering:

1. In June 1995 the Murray-Darling Ministerial Council decided to introduce caps for diversions. It was decided that diversions would be capped at 1993/4 levels for NSW, Victoria and SA. What is the status of that decision now? (Is it still in play?)
2. Sustainable Diversion Limits for the Plan estimated that there was about 210 GL of floodplain harvesting occurring across the entire Basin. NSW estimates there is three times that amount occurring in the Gwydir catchment alone and proposes to licence that harvesting. If that happens, what will happen to the SDL?

Regards,

Michael

Michael Slezak

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