

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Police
Minister for Water



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

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NEW CRITERIA TO BENEFIT BASIN COMMUNITIES

Victoria and New South Wales today released agreed socio-economic criteria to determine the requirements for any further water recovery under the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

The Andrews Labor Government has consistently said that Victoria will only support extra water recovery above the Plan's 2,750GL target if it can be achieved without negatively impacting farmers and Basin communities.

The criteria are designed to ensure that any new projects that could contribute to additional water recovery must have neutral or positive socio-economic outcomes for Basin communities.

The criteria below agreed by the two states, requires project applications to be public and that any project:

- Identifies potential impacts on the district and explains any benefits
- Does not directly increase the price of water
- Contributes to the current and future financial viability of irrigation districts
- Supports regional economies by not impacting on irrigation jobs now and in the future
- Does not have negative third-party impacts on the irrigation system, water market or communities
- Is supported by the community
- Identifies and improves social and environmental outcomes and does not negatively impact them
- Identifies, protects and improves Aboriginal values.

At the last Ministerial Council, the Labor Government secured agreement that there would be no on-farm water recovery projects in Victoria under the Federal Government's current water recovery program until the criteria was developed.

Victoria is already on track to deliver on its commitments under the Basin Plan and has prioritised investment in water recovery projects to meet its target of recovering 1,075GL of the overall Basin target of 2,750GL.

The Labor Government is calling on the Commonwealth to fund Victoria's 650GL of projects which will recover water and deliver environmental benefits to the Basin without impacting communities.

The Government is supporting irrigation communities by modernising, building and replacing irrigation infrastructure, reducing water losses and re-setting the Connections Project.

The Government is now seeking community feedback on the criteria, which will be discussed at the next Murray Darling Basin Ministerial Council in December. To comment on the criteria head to water.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

"We're ensuring any projects that seek to take further water away from our irrigation communities have a clear and transparent set of criteria to ensure that they do not negatively impact on Victorians."

"Victorian irrigators have already done much of the heavy lifting when it comes to water recovery and we will not allow new projects to impact our regional communities, jobs and families they support."

"We remain focused on meeting our commitments under the Basin Plan in a way that minimises the impacts to Victorian communities and benefits the environment."

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